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Jordan Times

An independent daily newspaper
جوردان تايمز
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Palestinians back next stage of autonomy

NABLUS, West Bank (AFP) — Some 56 per cent of Palestinians support the second stage of self-rule which is under negotiation with Israel, according to an opinion poll published Sunday. The Centre for Palestine Research and Studies found 22 per cent against the army redeployment on the West Bank, transfer of civilian powers and elections in an autonomy council. The remainder said they were unsure, the Nablus-based centre found in the survey of 1,109 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip carried out between July 6 and 9. Support for PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat dropped this month to 49 per cent from 55 per cent in May. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the imprisoned founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, received 13 per cent lacking, one per cent more than in May. Support for veteran Palestinian independent and former chief delegate to the Middle East peace talks, Haidar Abdul Shafi was steady at eight per cent. George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, picked up four per cent. But 26 per cent said they would vote for none of the above.

Arab-Israeli business group visits Kingdom

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of Palestinian-Israeli businessmen arrive here today for a three-day conference with their Jordanian counterparts, which will start on Tuesday. The group, coming from 19 cities and villages in Israel will discuss economic cooperation with Jordanian businessmen. The group's visit to Jordan comes in response to an invitation by the Hashemite Association for International Economic Cooperation, and is in line with directives from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Sami Shaheen, head of the group, who is also president of the Nazareth Chamber of Industry and Commerce, said the Palestinian-Israeli community is eager to reestablish ties with Jordan. The delegation, which includes 150 businessmen, is expected to spend four days in Jordan. The group will be received by Prince Hassan, under whose patronage the conference will be held.

Premier opens Petra new service

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shakir on Sunday officially inaugurated the Jordan News Agency's Petra, satellite broadcasting service. The agency signed an agreement with United Press International (UPI) last January to use its satellite network, which covers most of the world. Sharif Zeid congratulated the agency on its 27th anniversary, which fell on Sunday, and said Petra has become one of the landmarks of Jordanian cultural development. Sharif Zeid was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Al Kirati.

Violence flares in Bahrain

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain has been hit by renewed unrest after a long period of calm, with two liquor stores being set on fire and the death of a young Shiite in police custody, diplomats and residents said Saturday. Bahrain was the scene of violent demonstrations from December to April, which caused at least 12 deaths, including three police officers. "Two liquor stores were set ablaze on July 8, apparently with a delayed timer, causing several injuries, foreign diplomats in Bahrain told AFP by telephone. No one claimed responsibility for the incidents, described by the local press as a riot. At least one demonstration was reported by residents in the Shiite district of Sanabis, west of Manama, apparently sparked by the death of a young Shiite in prison. A resident said there had been heightened police patrols around Shiite areas, but no roadblocks. There have been incidents of small fires and exploding gas tanks. No foreign embassy in Bahrain, however, has issued safety warnings to its nationals.

Russian envoy holds talks in Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Russian envoy Viktor Posovvalyuk held talks here on Sunday with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Al Sharaa on pushing forward the Middle East peace process, officials said. Diplomats said Mr. Posovvalyuk, the Russian deputy foreign minister, was expected to discuss obstacles to peace in the region. His visit came two days after Dennis Ross, the U.S. State Department's Middle East coordinator, left the region after failing to persuade Israel and Syria to agree to a date for further military talks as part of their bilateral negotiations. Mr. Posovvalyuk, who arrived in Damascus on Friday and then went to Lebanon, where he met President Elias Hrawi, was due to leave for the Gulf on Monday.

Policeman, civilian killed in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Suspected Muslim militants killed a policeman and a civilian Sunday in a tense area of southern Egypt. The attacks came after police rounded up 127 suspected extremists on Friday and Saturday in Assiut province, long a centre of Islamist trying to overthrow Egypt's secular government. Details of the attack were not available. But police said militants shot and killed a policeman and a civilian in Sahel Selim, a village in Assiut, 320 kilometres south of Cairo. Two other policemen and a civilian were also wounded.

Tajik president visits Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Tajikistan's President Eмомali Rahmonov arrived here Sunday in the first visit to Iran by the Central Asian country's head of state. Mr. Rahmonov, heading a high-ranking political and economic delegation, was greeted at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Kabariti ends Saudi visit saying two countries agreed on need to better ties 'Riyadh to send ambassador to Amman'

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Saudi Arabia will send an ambassador to Jordan to fill the vacant post since 1990 in implementation of what Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti described as a Jordanian-Saudi agreement to "work on breaking the ice" between the two countries after a prolonged period of strain in their relations.

Senior Jordanian official since 1990, resulted in an agreement between the two sides to "continue dialogue, communication and meetings between the two countries." Mr. Kabariti told reporters. He said that Riyadh has also agreed to facilitate visa residency issuance for Jordanians working in Saudi Arabia as well as renew or expand their current residency permits.



Abdul Karim Kabariti

Between the two brotherly countries," Mr. Kabariti told Jordan News Agency, Petra. On his part, Prince Saud Al Faisal told the London-based BBC Radio in an interview following almost 11 hours of talks with Mr. Kabariti that he expected "a

better relationship between the two countries in the future." Agence France Presse (AFP) quoted Prince Saud as saying that the two countries "will work towards removing all obstacles" in their relations. Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador in Amman in 1990 and has since then been represented by a charge d'affaires. Jordan reappointed an ambassador in Saudi Arabia earlier this year. AFP quoted a Riyadh based diplomat as saying that Mr. Kabariti's visit, following those by Sudan's foreign minister and the president of Yemen, was another sign that Saudi Arabia "is trying to normalise ties" with Arab countries with which relations deteriorated after the Gulf crisis.

(Continued on page 12)

PLO, Israel launch self-rule talks under news blackout

ZICHRON YAAKOV, Israel (Agencies) — Israel and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators sealed themselves away Sunday for non-stop negotiations in a bid to strike a deal before July 25 to extend self-rule across the West Bank.



A view of the hotel where Israeli and Palestinian officials are holding their talks (AFP photo)

Reporters and protesters were kept away from the venue, a hill-top hotel at Zichron Yaakov, south of Haifa, amid high security on the first day of talks on all aspects of the second phase of autonomy. Officials imposed a news blackout to provide negotiators with the best conditions to draft an agreement to redeploy troops, devolve civilian powers and hold elections.

"There will be no announcement until an agreement is made," a senior Israeli army officer told the Hebrew news agency ITIM. The second stage of the 1993 framework Israel-PLO peace deal, already a year late, will cover an Israeli army redeployment away from Arab population centres in the West Bank, Palestinian elections and transfer of civil authorities.

The first stage of the peace accord, self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, began in May 1994. Mr. Peres said the most

difficult remaining issues were control over water and sewage, and the city of Hebron, where 415 Jewish settlers live amidst 100,000 Arabs. Settlers are to remain during self-rule. Their fate will be set at final status talks in 1996.

On Sunday, Israeli police arrested 25 Jewish settlers in Hebron. Witnesses said settlers attacked Arab houses and vehicles overnight. Police said the incident began when they detained four or five youths on Saturday who shot slingshots at Palestinians.

Ahu Libdeh said 60 Palestinian and 70 Israeli negotiators were attending the talks at the northern Ganei Haacarmel Hotel. The sides hope keeping the media at a distance will facilitate their work.

(Continued on page 12)

Iraq frees 2 Americans; U.S. says move 'important'

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Sunday freed two Americans imprisoned for four months for illegally entering Iraq. William Barloon and David Daliberti were released following the intervention of U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson, a New Mexico Democrat, who met Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in his presidential palace Sunday.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, welcoming the "good news from Iraq," said the men were taken to the Polish embassy, which handles American interests in Iraq. Mr. Christopher said the release of Mr. Barloon and Mr. Daliberti was "an important first step," but would not lead to the lifting of sanctions. "Not at all. This is totally unconnected," Mr. Christopher said. Earlier on Sunday, President Bill Clinton said in a statement that he supported the efforts of representative Bill Richardson.

(Continued on page 12)

Kuwait, S. Arabia to demarcate border

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been holding talks to try to demarcate their desert border, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said Sunday.

The Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer visited Kuwait recently to hand (Sheikh Sabah) a message from the Saudi defence minister, Prince Sultan Ibn Abdel Aziz, about demarcating the border. Sheikh Sabah said without giving details. "Contacts have been taking place between the two countries on this subject for a while," Sheikh Sabah told the Al Watan daily, quoted by the official KUNA news agency. He did not elaborate on the border to be delineated. An independent MP, Abdul Mohsen Jamal, told AFP that "the two countries

Appointed members of Amman council represent minorities, old Amman families, business community

By Ramadan Al Rawashdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The 40-member Amman Municipal Council holds its first meeting Monday afternoon under the chairmanship of Mamdouh Al Abbadi who was Saturday reappointed as Amman mayor by the Council of Ministers. The council groups 20 members elected in the past week's municipal elections. The 20 other members were appointed by the Council of Ministers Saturday evening. A quick review of the list of council members reveals that the appointed members represent minorities who are not represented by the elected members of the council as well as government departments which offer public services that are connected to the municipality's work. Among the latter category are the governor of Amman, secretaries general of the Ministries of Municipal and Rural Affairs,

Public Works and the Water Authority together with directors general of the Lands and Survey Department, the Amman Education Department, the Jordan Electric Power Company, the Housing and Urban Development Department and the Telecommunications Corporation. The new council includes three members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) who were elected to represent Ras Al 'Ain, Khirbet Al Souq and Bader districts of the Greater Amman area along with one representative of Al Ahd Party, who won for the Abu Nuseir district and a representative of the Democratic Faction from the Marka district. The appointed members also represent ethnic groups which were the earliest residents of the capital. Hence the list contained a representative of the Circassian community of Wadi Seer and a representative of the Chechen community in Sweileh.



Mamdouh Abbadi

Some elected members of the council hail from tribes who were the original inhabitants of the city, like the Lawzi tribe in Jubeiha, the Hadid tribe in Qweismeh and Hamdan and Naser, the Irteimeh tribe in Marka, the D'jeh in Basman district, Al Abbadi tribe in Tlaa Al Ali, Al Adwan in Shafa Badran, and the Fayed tribe, which has strong support in the

Wihdat refugee camp and Palestinians from the Yarmuk district. In addition, the Ahadi district chosen a Jordanian of Palestinian origin who enjoys the support of the Al Hussein refugee camp. Since no Christian has won in the elections and because the Christians constitute a majority in some areas of Amman, the government has appointed a leading Christian businessman. A member representing the Jordanians of Syrian origin was also appointed to the council. The list of appointees also includes several members representing businessmen and doctors as well as one journalist whose grandfather had served as Amman mayor between 1925 and 1931. A representative of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the industrial sector and a retired army officer from Al Huneit tribe of the Qweismeh district were also appointed.

(Continued on page 12)



Refugees from the Bosnian "safe area" of camp set up by the U.N. in Tuzla (AFP photo) this week, walk among tents at a refugee

Western military chiefs meet on Bosnia as Serbs advance to Zepa

LONDON (Agencies) — British, French and U.S. military chiefs met here Sunday night on a French action plan to stop the Bosnian Serb rout of U.N.-declared safe areas in Bosnia as the Serbs advanced on a second of the enclaves.

British Chief-of-Staff, Field Marshal Peter Inge, French Admiral Jacques Lanxade and U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff General John Shalikashvili arrived grim-faced at the British Defence Ministry at 5:45 (1645 GMT), ignoring journalists' questions.

A ministry spokesman said only that they were expected to meet late into the night. The meeting began as U.N. officials reported the Bosnian Serb infantry was advancing on the eastern enclave of Zepa, threatening a second U.N. safe area with extinction less than a week after the fall of Srebrenica. NATO warplanes roared overhead in a show of strength but took no action. They arrived over Zepa 35 minutes after a request for "air presence" was issued by the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR).

In Washington, top U.S. officials meanwhile reiterated their opposition to sending U.S. ground troops to fight in Bosnia-Herzegovina, saying the best alternative was to beef up U.N. forces. "We will not inject American troops into the situation in Bosnia. The best alternative is to strengthen UNPROFOR to make it more effective," Secretary of State Warren Christopher told NBC television. "We should not enter the war as combatants," De-

fence Secretary William Perry told ABC television. The United States has said it is ready to provide its allies with logistics support, but has always refused to deploy troops on the ground, except to protect U.N. troops in case of a pullout. The Sunday Times of London reported President Bill Clinton had offered to put 200 combat helicopters at the disposal of U.N. forces to halt the Serb advance on the safe areas but this was not confirmed in Washington. The 39-month-old Bosnian war "cannot be won or lost on the battlefield," Mr. Christopher said, adding that it remained necessary to "find the basis for a negotiated settlement."

"The United States' strongest interest is to contain the conflict," and prevent it from spreading to the whole Balkan area, he said. Mr. Perry suggested that the 12,000-strong rapid reaction force set up by France, Britain and the Netherlands in Bosnia, "plus a really vigorous use of NATO air" could make a difference to the situation on the ground. Speaking in Paris ahead of the meeting here, French President Jacques Chirac reiterated that the international community could not allow itself to become "accomplices to the unacceptable" in Bosnia. A French military official said, also in Paris, that Adm. Lanxade would outline a "precise plan" to his British and U.S. counterparts on preventing the enclaves from falling into Bosnian Serb hands. "We have detailed proposals, a precise plan: a modus operandi, manning, and the

means," the official said Sunday without going into detail. British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said earlier Sunday that Britain was "very willing" to consider any realistic military proposals for Bosnia. "We need... political leadership, but also we need to take account of professional military judgment," he said. "It is the combination of the two which we are working on."

Mr. Rifkind said the "main contribution of the United Nations has not been so much in the enclaves, it has been in central Bosnia where the vast majority of the Bosnian Muslim population live — an area which was seeing violent conflict a year ago, but which has enjoyed relative peace since then." On Saturday, French Defence Minister Charles Millon outlined plans for a multinational force, comprising French and British troops and possibly some from other nations, to block the Serb advance. But German Defence Ministry spokesman Hans-Dieter Wichter said Sunday that Germany would not take part in such a force. "No engagement is forecast beyond that proposed by the Bundestag (lower chamber of parliament)," he said, reiterating that the German army would support a rapid reaction force. On the battlefield, Bosnian Serb soldiers backed by tanks penetrated in within 500 metres of the centre of Zepa against light resistance, a U.N. spokesman said. "They (Bosnian Serbs) were within 500 metres of the

(Continued on page 12)



Queen Noor Sunday, accompanied by Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khatib, visits Jerash to oversee the final preparations for the 1995 Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (Petra photo)

Queen inspects site of Jerash Festival

Amman (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday visited Jerash and inspected the final preparations for the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts, which the Queen will open next Wednesday.

The Higher National Committee, chaired by Queen Noor, annually examines the site before the start of the festival. The committee

cooperates with the Department of Antiquities in protecting the site and plans for clearing away all traces of the festival within a month of the final performance. The Queen stressed the importance of providing the visitors with all necessary services, including organised and unrestricted entrances and exits as well as clean and comfortable

'Telephone line overload caused by social events'

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An eventful combination of municipal elections and the announcement of the Tawjili examinations jammed telephone circuits in the Kingdom over the weekend, causing the temporary dysfunction of telephone operations, according to sources at the Telecommunication Corporation (TCC) Sunday.

Telephone users during the past two weeks have encountered difficulties in making phone calls. Lines were either unavailable or were disconnected for several hours.

According to Walid Dweik, director general of the TCC, the disconnections were computerised procedures fixed to switch off under heavy demand. "The computer network at the TCC automatically disconnects certain phone lines if they are overloaded, he said.

Mr. Dweik said that the telephone networks that operate in the Kingdom are designed to handle 120 phone calls for every 1,000 telephone line per hour.

"If the number exceeds 120 the phones are automatically isolated by the computer and they are connected again when the number of attempts decreases," he explained.

According to Mr. Dweik, this is not the first time this problem has occurred. During social occasions pressure on telephone lines and subsequent disconnections

can occur, he said.

Telephone lines are usually clogged between the hours of 10 am and 1 pm.

He said a study by the TCC indicated that one telephone network in downtown Amman handled more than 200,000 telephone call attempts in one hour in a network that is designed to handle 180,000 attempts in that hour.

Mr. Dweik pointed out that the TCC tried to coordinate with the Ministry of Education on the delay of the Tawjili results announcement to avoid a foreseen clash with the elections. This did not materialise.

"For some reason we were unable to coordinate the timing with the ministry and they announced the results during the day which caused extra pressure on the computerised telephone networks," Mr. Dweik explained.

Meanwhile, Mr. Dweik denied recent allegations that the corporation had intended to add an extra digit to the six-digit telephone numbers.

The addition of an extra digit, however, is a possibility, he added. In order to overcome the shortages and pressure of telephone lines, the TCC is currently negotiating with several companies to bring new telephone networks with an approximate capacity of 220,000 telephone lines, to be distributed around Jordan by the end of this year.



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker with Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Ali Abul Ragheb and visiting Egyptian Minister of International Cooperation Youssef Ghali (right) Sunday discuss economic cooperative efforts between Egypt and Jordan (Petra photo)

Jordan, Egypt discuss regional economic matters

AMMAN (J.T.) — Egyptian Minister of International Cooperation Youssef Ghali met in Amman Sunday with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Ali Abul Ragheb and later told reporters that discussions covered topics of mutual concern particularly in economy at regional and international levels.

Referring to the work of the Jordanian-Egyptian holding company which opened a meeting Sunday in Amman, Dr. Ghali said that the company's general assembly will consider a new economic policy aimed

at stimulating and increasing economic cooperation between the two countries and the rest of the region.

Established in the late 1980s, the holding company has been carrying out a number of economic projects in Jordan and Egypt.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the Prime Minister emphasised the need for Egypt and Jordan to uphold their mutual cooperation and coordinate their stands in economic affairs at all levels.

Speaking at the meeting which was attended by Mr. Abul Ragheb, the Prime Minister said that it was

important for Cairo and Amman to maintain their special relationship and that close cooperation was in the best interest of the Egyptian and Jordanian people.

Addressing the press after the meetings, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that both countries are in total agreement on several topics including trade and economic affairs.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said he hoped that Egypt will take an active role in the upcoming Middle East and North Africa Economic summit due in Amman in October. The two countries were currently negotiating an economic partnership with Europe and were closely

NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Iraqi president

Amman (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein congratulating him on his country's national day and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Iraqi people further progress and prosperity.

Abu Ata to head IPPF Arab bureau

Amman (Petra) — The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Friday elected Abdullah Abu Ata, president of the Jordanian Society for Family Protection and Planning (JSFPP), as President of the Executive Committee of the IPPF Arab World Bureau. Mr. Abu Ata's election by the IPPF's bureau is a gesture of the Federation's appreciation of the important role played by the JSFPP volunteers and staff in promoting family planning at the local, regional and international levels. Mr. Abu Ata was elected at the end of the Arab World Bureau meeting which concluded Friday in Cyprus. Representatives of 14 Arab states took part in the meetings.

Seminar on King Abdullah to open

Amman (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker opens a seminar Thursday on the life of the late King Abdullah Ibo Al Hussein and his role in building the state and ensuring independence at the Political Life Museum. Participants will discuss ten working papers on the political and military role of the late King Abdullah in the Great Arab Revolt, his political and legislative role in independence and building the state and the national dimension of his life, in addition to his role in defending the Palestinian cause. The papers will also cover the establishment of Trans-Jordan.

Ministry plans JD 32m highway

Amman (Petra) — Ministry of Public Works is currently preparing to float a JD 32 million contract to construct a four-lane highway linking Wadi Al Naqab with Aqaba, according to Mohammad Ensour, director of the ministry's road department. Tender for the 72-kilometre road project will be offered to a foreign company, Mr. Ensour said. He added that work on the project will start three months after the contract is signed. The contract is financed by the International Monetary Fund and the European Investment Bank and is expected to be built in three years, Mr. Ensour added.



Samih Darwazah

National company to prospect for oil

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Oil Company, recently registered as a public shareholding company with a JD 20 million capital, will be granted concession to prospect for oil and natural gas in the Rishah district, close to the Iraqi border with Jordan, according to an announcement Sunday by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah.

Quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the minister said that the company which was created through a government decision in July of 1994, will focus its initial operations on prospecting for gas while there are positive signs of the presence of commercial quantities in the district.

According to the minister, the company will expand its operations in the Rishah district which already produces natural gas used mainly in generating electricity.

Currently, natural gas from the Rishah fields produces gas that is sufficient to generate 17 per cent of the overall electric power in the Kingdom.

The minister said that the new finds could be enough to generate all the Kingdom's electric power and save the country the four million tonnes of oil it currently imports to meet its energy needs.

Current daily production of natural gas at the Rishah fields yields 900,000 cubic metres of gas which is used in the electric power generation process, according to ministry of energy sources.

Mr. Darwazah said that the national company has the right to conduct oil and gas exploration operations in other Arab countries and that Sudan, Yemen and Algeria have already made contacts with his ministry over this subject.

Meeting surveys work-in-progress of 5-nation power link

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan took part in a two-day ministerial meeting held in Turkey last week to assess the progress of electric power linkage plans between five Middle Eastern countries: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

The project is to be carried out in stages until the year 2002.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah, who attended the meeting, described the discussions as successful, held in an atmosphere characterised by full understanding and cooperation.

The minister, who returned to Amman from the meeting Saturday evening, was quoted Sunday by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the ministers of energy in the five countries have approved technical decisions taken so far in the project.

This referred to a first stage which entails connecting Egyptian and Jordanian grids by August of 1997. Jordanian and Syrian grids are to be connected by December of 1997, Iraqi and Syrian grids by 1998, while Iraqi and Turkish grids will be connected by the year 2000, according to the minister.

Mr. Darwazah said that Arab countries will be linked with East European grids through Turkey at a later stage. The Egyptian grid will provide them with links to North African Arab countries and later to the western parts of Europe through Morocco and Spain.

The minister estimated Jordan's need for generators at 800-mega-watt power in order to meet the Kingdom's overall electric needs.

Work is underway for the Egyptian-Jordanian link with the help of a Norwegian company which is laying out a 13-kilometre cable under the Aqaba Gulf sea at a depth of 850 metres.

The 400-kilo-volt cable will be laid with the help of



IMAMS GRADUATE: Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday delivers BA degrees to 99 Jordanian, Arab and Muslim students who graduated from Al Da'wa College for religious education. Addressing the graduation ceremony Awqaf Minister Abdul Salam Abbadi, also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the college, said that the college, set up by the Ministry, graduates highly qualified preachers and imams. Equipped with the right Islamic education and guidance, the graduating imams are to play a role in reflecting the tolerant teachings and principles of Islam, he said. Also addressing the ceremony was the College Dean Ibrahim Qaisi who said the college awards bachelors degree to students, who have successfully completed 164 credit hours. (Petra photo)

Doctors stress need to administer meningitis vaccine

By Rima Cortbawi

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Najwa Khoury, professor in the Department of Paediatrics and Infectious Diseases at Jordan University Hospital, recently said that children's routine immunisation programme should include the haemophilus influenza type b (Hib) vaccine.

Dr. Khoury was referring to the vaccine that would combat meningitis, (inflammation of the lining of the brain) a disease with serious repercussions and deceptive symptoms.

This is also an objective of the anti-meningitis society which was recently established in Jordan to help eradicate the disease.

The society is the brainchild of painter Sana Masri, who lost a 17-year-old daughter to meningitis and whose efforts, since then, have been to work towards the eradication of this disease.

Because bacterial meningitis brings about rapid deterioration of the body, the most effective method to totally fight the disease is by vaccination, said Dr. Khoury.

No vaccine, however, can protect against all strains of

meningitis yet, but some germs can be safeguarded against, Dr. Khoury said.

French statistics reveal that 56 per cent of Hib infections in young lives lead to meningitis, according to Omar Abu Youssef, medical representative of the Pasteur Merieux Institute here.

Although meningitis can affect any age group, special attention must be awarded to children "because they are simply unable to express their grievances as adults can," said Infectious Disease specialist and internist Jamal Wadi.

The disease can be caused by several germs, some bacterial and some viral. However, according to consultant neurologist Husni Rashid, the three types of bacterial germs (namely, meningococcal, pneumococcal and Hib), which are generally more serious, may be contagious and can cause septicaemia (blood poisoning) or infections in the blood.

Meningococcal and pneumococcal germs mostly affect adults, but Hib attacks children under the age of five, Dr. Rashid said.

Bacterial meningitis, if not

treated promptly, can either be fatal or lead to permanent handicaps such as deafness or brain damage, said Dr. Rashid. The germs that cause bacterial meningitis are very common and live naturally in the back of the nose and the throat.

They are certainly not uncommon in Jordan, Dr. Rashid added, and while they are spread around through coughs, sneezes or close contact, they cannot live for more than a few seconds outside the body.

That explains the endemic nature of bacterial meningitis, Dr. Rashid added.

Dr. Khoury explained that under normal circumstances there is a 3 per cent chance of finding carriers in any population, which does not cause a problem if close contact is not frequent.

In crowds, she added, proliferation of the carrier rate results in increasing chances of affliction, especially in vulnerable people with low immunity. When the responsible bacteria overcome the body's defences, the outcome is meningitis.

The Hib vaccine is now being regularly used in many

countries. Dr. Khoury went on to say, and it has proved to be very effective.

"In fact it has totally eradicated these strains of bacteria in parts of the developed world where the vaccine is used routinely," she added.

The only major shortcoming of the vaccine is cost, according to Dr. Khoury. However, considering the weeks of costly treatment in store for Hib sufferers once they are admitted into hospital, the vaccine is the most financially viable solution, Mr. Abu Youssef said.

French studies show that the incidence rate is the highest in children between the age of three months to two years, he said.

"The number of injections needed decreases with age, and children above five years do not need to be vaccinated," said Mr. Abu Youssef.

The Hib vaccine was introduced to Jordan in 1994. Because American statistics proved its efficiency in the 1993 eradication of Hib in infants, "it is a prime aim that this vaccine be routinely administered to all Jordanian children in the near future," Dr. Khoury said.

Death toll rises to 359 in S. Korean store collapse

SEOUL (Agencies) — Rescuers Sunday retrieved 37 more bodies, including one believed to be a French businessman, from the shattered debris of Seoul's collapsed department store, raising the confirmed death toll in the disaster to 359.

At Saint Mary's Hospital, Park Seung-Hyon, a 19-year-old baby clothes salesman rescued alive Saturday after 17 days in a small air pocket, was reported by doctors to be making a quick recovery.

The teenager's near miraculous survival revitalised exhausted rescuers combing the rubble of the Sampoong store, which collapsed on June 29.

But they found no-one alive Sunday, only the 37 corpses which brought the official toll to the highest of any South Korean civil disaster. The previous record was 292 when a ferry sank in 1993.

The bodies discovered Sunday included a foreigner believed to be Pierre-Francois Lefant, a 34-year-old French businessman from the Paris-based dairy firm Bon Grand Soparind.

His body was found near the remains of a hamburger shop and moved to the morgue of the National Medical Centre. French embassy officials have visited the centre to identify the decomposed body, an AFP photographer said.

Embassy sources earlier said that Lefant was reported missing after making a business visit to the store on June 29 when the five-storey building went down.

He was the second foreigner to be confirmed dead in the disaster. On July 6, the body of Teng Tung-Fa, a 43-year-old Taiwanese chef at a Sampoong restaurant was retrieved.

The two other foreigners still listed missing are Frank Bakes, 58, an American consultant for Korean Power Engineering Co., and a two-year-old Korean American.

The number of missing stood at just under 300 after Ms. Park was found alive under a tangle of slabs Saturday. She had been trapped for 377 hours without food and water.

She was reported by doctors to be recuperating fast, and television showed her being closely examined by a team of astounded doctors.

"She is in miraculously good condition," one of them said.

Ms. Park, the 36th survivor pulled from the rubble of the fashionable store, was found to have bruises and minor scratches.

"Am I really alive?" Park exclaimed when she got up early Sunday from her hospital bed. Then she asked if she could eat, Yonhap Television News (YTN) said.

Survivors of the disaster said Sunday they still had nightmares after being buried under tonnes of rubble.

An official at the Emergency Task Force said 408 survivors were still in hospital while 522 had been sent home.

Ms. Park said she had trouble sleeping on her first night in hospital because of nightmares.

"I couldn't sleep well last night. I got up many times because I kept hearing sounds of concrete slabs crashing," she said.

She was out the only one suffering. Survivors pulled out of the rubble only two days after the collapse on June 29 said they too were having recurring nightmares.

"I often hear this big bang and I vision a building collapsing. It startles me all the time," Ha Choon-Sa, 44, told reporters.

Ms. Ha was rescued together with 23 others two days after the department store collapsed.

Ms. Ha's daughter said her mother would still get up in the middle of the night screaming "help."

Fifty-year-old Kang Ki-Chul, who was also among the 24, also said he had similar problems, and worse.

"I would go to the toilet, but I can't get back to my room. I forget where I am," he said.

But the 24 survivors said that because they were given a second chance at life, they would dedicate themselves to society.

One survivor who was sent home a few hours after the collapse said she still had visions of the building, which fell like a pack of cards.

"I managed to rush out in time. But I still have nightmares and visions of the store collapsing, and people crying and shouting," said Lee Yong-Ae. She was shopping in the store with her aunt when the disaster occurred.

Doctors said the nightmares and after-effects of the disaster would be worse for those who have been entombed in the debris for a longer time.



U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali (2nd left) shakes hands with Jonas Savimbi, leader of the former rebel National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) at Bailundo Airport, prior to a private meeting at the party's headquarters (AFP photo)

Ghali: peace in Angola irreversible

LUANDA (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said after separate meetings with President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi this weekend the Angolan peace process was irreversible.

Angola's State News Agency (ANGOP) quoted Dr. Ghali as saying he was more optimistic about the success of the U.N.-brokered peace process since his meetings with the two rival Angolan leaders.

The U.N. chief met Dr. Savimbi Saturday at UNITA's central highlands headquarters in Bailundo, on the second day of a visit to assess the peace agreement signed between the two rival sides last November to end Africa's longest-running conflict.

"Peace is real and from the heart which will permit the people of Angola national reconciliation," Dr. Ghali told reporters in Bailundo.

He met Mr. Dos Santos in Luanda Friday and said the Angolan conflict which killed 500,000 people in nearly 20 years of civil war was now over.

Dr. Savimbi told Radio France Internationale on his meeting with Dr. Ghali: "This was a meeting of old friends, and the atmosphere was very warm."

"He simply asked us to do everything we could to achieve success, in the interest of Angola. So there were no threats. There was only encouragement," Dr. Savimbi added.

But the UNITA leader said the rebel movement wanted the promised 7,600 U.N. peacekeepers deployed soon.

"We think the situation itself was stabilised, but I think it will be even more useful if we can have the U.N. troops here," Dr. Savimbi added.

The implementation of the peace accord is running five months behind schedule and only 2,000 of the planned 7,600 blue-helmeted U.N. soldiers have been deployed.

Dr. Ghali Saturday also visited the central highlands capital of Huambo, about 100 kilometres south of Bailundo, formerly the UNITA Headquarters until Angolan government troops recaptured it last year.

The government and UNITA have been at war virtually since independence from Portugal in 1975. A previous accord collapsed after UNITA lost U.N.-supervised elections in September 1992 and went back to war.

Liz Hurley arrives home alone

LONDON (AP) — The smiling girlfriend of actor Hugh Grant arrived alone in Britain and refused to say whether she has forgiven him for hiring a prostitute. "Why do you ask such irritating questions?" a frowning Elizabeth Hurley demanded of reporters who met her flight from Los Angeles into London's Heathrow Airport.

"I've come back to work and Hugh is in America working too," Grant is doing the round of U.S. talk shows to promote his new film Nine Months — and apologise for his behaviour. The pair appeared hand-in-hand Tuesday night at the film's Los Angeles premiere. But the 29-year-old model appeared unhappy and strained. When a reporter asked Saturday if their relationship was still on, Mr. Hurley snapped, "I don't think you should ask questions like that. I wouldn't ask you if your wife had done something bad."

Wearing a flimsy white top, tight white jeans and dark glasses, she was escorted from the plane to the airport building by airline officials. She waited for more than 40 minutes to reclaim her baggage before hurrying to her chauffeur-driven car. Grant, the suave British star of Four Weddings and A Funeral was arrested June 27 in his car with a prostitute. On Tuesday, he pleaded no contest to a charge of lewd conduct in Los Angeles city court. He was ordered to pay \$1,180, placed on probation and told to participate in an AIDS education programme.

Ex-Beatie helps local hospital

RYE, England (AP) — Paul and Linda McCartney joined the people of Rye to celebrate their success in getting a new hospital for the town. The 53-year-old ex-Beatie and his wife, who live nearby, marched at the head of a parade through the picturesque south coast town to mark the opening of the Cottage Hospital. It replaces one closed four years ago after spending cuts by the government-funded National Health Service. A local campaign, supported by the McCartneys and comedian Spike Milligan, raised more than £5 million (\$7.5 million) for the 16-bed hospital, which will have 30 self-contained units for the elderly and infirm. "This is a victory for people power. It could not have been done without you," Paul McCartney told the crowd. "My mother was a nurse. She would have been proud of you." Milligan, another local resident, said, "We did it against the odds. The turning point was when Paul donated £800,000 (\$1,200,000). That was the winning card."

Women safer pilots, says British report

LONDON (R) — A study by Britain's civil aviation administration has found women pilots are far safer than men, who are four times more likely to crash, the Sunday Times reported. It quoted the unpublished study as saying a comparison of accident reports showed women pilots were far less likely to crash than male pilots. The Sunday Times said the study covered the performances of 10,000 pilots going back to World War II. "There is still prejudice in commercial airlines," the newspaper quoted helicopter pilot Georgia Hunter-Jones as saying. "But passengers should be aware that any woman who gets into the cockpit will have to be twice as good as the man sitting next to her, so they can relax and enjoy the flight."

Man kills attacking leopard with bare hands

GABORONE (AFP) — A man killed an attacking leopard with his bare hands in Botswana's remote central Kalahari Desert, according to a newspaper report received Saturday. Erik Van Heerden, a drifter at a mineral exploration site, was attacked by the leopard after leaving his house, the weekly Mmegi newspaper said. "I acted on impulse and locked by hands around his throat," Van Heerden told Mmegi. "The duel was over in five minutes." Van Heerden, who works for South African mining giant Anglo American, was admitted to hospital but released after treatment, the newspaper said.

Russia hangs back on cooperation with NATO

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The 16 members of NATO meet at ambassador level with Russia here Monday for the first time since Moscow approved two cooperation agreements with the Atlantic alliance at the end of May.

The meeting with Russia's ambassador to Belgium Vitaly Churkin is hoped to give a new impetus to relations between the two sides, with diplomats saying that the move in May had not been followed up.

NATO, which is in the process of concluding an internal study on its enlargement to take in former communist Central and Eastern European states, would like to develop in parallel a constructive relationship with Russia in a bid to ease the hostility in Moscow to such an expansion.

But Russia, which considers the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to have

no further reason to exist with the end of the cold war, views NATO enlargement to countries which were once in Moscow's ideological and military orbit to be a threat to its own security.

An analyst here said the Russians had a strategy of holding up the expansion process, and were not likely to relent in the wake of remarks made in Poland by U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry.

Poland will be one of the first countries to be admitted to NATO, where it will enjoy full guarantees of security. Mr. Perry said, adding that the political decision to expand NATO had already been taken.

In fact, Monday's meeting is being held at NATO's initiative, following several gatherings of the council of ambassadors of the member states to draw up a list of proposals to be put to Mr. Churkin.

China accuses Taiwan of 'vacation diplomacy'

BEIJING (AFP) — China Sunday reiterated its vocal opposition to what it sees as Taiwan's campaign for international status, accusing the island's president of lavishing money to promote independence.

In a strongly worded editorial, Xinhua News Agency pointed to "an increasingly obvious tendency of pro-Taiwan independence... since (President) Lee Teng-Hui came into office."

Beijing has become increasingly fractious over Taiwan since Mr. Lee paid an ostensibly private visit to the United States in June, thereby souring diplomatic ties with Washington.

"(Lee) spared no expense and lavished money in collusion with those in the United States who have attempted to interrupt China's reunification and create two Chinas or one China, one Taiwan," Xinhua said.

The Taiwanese president, had been attempting to "expand living space internationally" by engaging in "vacation diplomacy" and "stop-over diplomacy," Xinhua added in a clear reference to Mr. Lee's visit.

Taiwan Premier Lien Chan added to the furore by visiting Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic only days after Mr. Lee's return from the United States.

The editorial said China had been making "unrelenting efforts to safeguard territorial integrity and national unification over the past four decades" and said the two sides should "strengthen mutual understanding."

Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a rebel province of the mainland since 1949.

China was further angered by last week's establishment of formal diplomatic ties between Taiwan and Gambia.

The move, which brought to 30 the number of countries that officially recognise the island, was described by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman as "disgraceful."

Taiwan Sunday rejected what it called a confusing statement by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord that the island does not want to be a free country.

Chechen talks adjourned for 3 days

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Russian and Chechen negotiators Sunday called a three-day halt to peace talks here, dashing hopes of an imminent settlement to end seven months of devastating conflict in the separatist republic.

Chechen military chief-staff Aslan Mashkhadov said the adjournment was agreed to allow both sides to refer back to their respective leaders on outstanding points of disagreement.

"All the negotiators have agreed to call a break for three days. A lot of questions need consultation," Mr. Mashkhadov told a press conference here in the presence of all delegates to the talks.

The negotiations had only just resumed after an earlier delay when Chechen chief negotiator Usman Imaev fell ill, but both sides had been optimistic a peace settlement could be signed later in the day.

A doctor was called to check on Mr. Imaev's condition at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission where the meeting was being held.

The doctor said Mr. Imaev was "seriously ill" and talks would have to continue without him. He did not elaborate on the nature of the illness.

"We have to take Usman Imaev's illness into account," Mr. Mashkhadov added. "Decisions of such importance cannot be made without him."

A member of the Russian delegation, Arkady Volsky, was also said to be ill, but had been due to attend the talks.

Yuliy Zorin, a member of the Russian delegation, said, "But despite goodwill on both sides, a final settlement could still prove difficult."

Only 18 articles of the peace settlement have been approved so far by the two sides with a further 20 or so still being disputed.

One of the key issues to be resolved was Chechenya's future status, either independent or as member of the Russian Federation, Chechen delegation member Akhmad Zakayev was quoted as saying by Interfax News Agency.

Dissect also focusses on who will run Chechenya until elections, tentatively set for November.

Mr. Zorin said a ceasefire in effect for over a month was still being violated and on Saturday five Russian soldiers were wounded by separatist fire.

But he insisted "these violations do not prevent negotiations developing to plan."

Chechen negotiators said Saturday they were close to an agreement with the Russians and expected to resolve outstanding differences over executive powers in the republic at further talks Sunday.

"If there are no political manoeuvres, an agreement is possible as early as Sunday (because) the disputed areas are not fundamental," Vyacheslav Mikhailov, the head of the Russian delegation, was quoted as saying by Interfax.

The Russian side hopes to outline plans for sharing power between Moscow and Grozny, Mr. Zakayev said.

"There is a compromise deal which ought to be able to satisfy both sides," he said. "This document was put forward Saturday, but we have not had time to study it in detail."

Diplomats said the Russian side was eager to wrap up an agreement before Monday or Tuesday, when Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is due to sign a key economic accord with the European Union in Brussels.

According to various estimates, between 15,000 and 30,000 people have died since Russian troops marched into Chechenya Dec. 11 to quell a three-year secessionist movement.

China dissident's wife pleads for help

SHANGHAI (R) — The wife of Shanghai's leading dissident, who has been released from labour camp on medical parole, pleaded for help Sunday in seeking treatment overseas for him.

Yang Zhou, a founding member of the Shanghai-based Association for Human Rights, was released Saturday after serving a year of a three-year "re-education through labour" sentence.

His wife, Li Guopin, said doctors had found a growth near his stomach and she feared for his life.

"The hospitals here have treated us badly. He desperately needs to go abroad to get treatment," Ms. Li told Reuters Sunday. "We don't have much time and we need help."

She said friends overseas were planning to support an application to leave the country.

Mr. Yang was released within 24 hours of applying for medical parole, and Ms. Li said this unusual speed indicated that doctors who examined him feared he was dangerously ill. She has not been given written medical records.

"They don't want this to become a big incident," Ms. Li said, explaining the decision to release him.

Ms. Li said Mr. Yang had difficulty speaking. He had vomited blood after medical tests conducted at the camp hospital and was now weak.

He was able to sit up but was exhausted after a long drive home from the camp in Jiangsu province.

Authorities this month informed Ms. Li that an appeal by Mr. Yang against his sentence had been rejected.

Ms. Li has been concerned about Mr. Yang's health since he was detained in May last year. Authorities initially refused to allow her to send him food and medicine.

Mr. Yang has spent much of his life in jail, starting with part in pro-democracy agitation around 1979 known as the Democracy Wall Movement.

He was one of thousands rounded up after troops crushed student-led protests around Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 and was angered authorities by organising memorial events on anniversaries of the massacre.

Mr. Yang has been waging a constant battle with Shanghai officials to register the Association for Human Rights he helped found in 1978.



Yang Zhou



Bruce Montgomery (right), his wife Ghail (centre), and Alan Cohen try to beat the heat as they wait for tickets to a Shakespeare production in New York's Central Park. The trio arrived at 5:30 a.m., and by 1:00 p.m. the temperature had climbed up to one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) (AFP photo)

U.S. heat wave toll soars to 108

NEW YORK (AP) — Smothering heat and violent storms kept a stranglehold on the eastern half of the United States Saturday as the weather's death toll rose to at least 108.

In Chicago, the medical examiner said they received the bodies of at least 56 people Saturday who had died of heat related causes. Widespread power outages overnight killed fans and air conditioners in the 90-degree (30-degree Celsius) weather.

"We're calling this a weather-related disaster," said Mike Boehmer, an assistant administrator for the medical examiner.

While a breath of slightly cooler air floated across the upper Midwest and into the northeast, it touched off severe thunderstorms. Falling

trees killed five people in New York state and lightning may have killed a Massachusetts woman.

One New York woman was killed when a white pine snapped in the wind and toppled onto her family's camper.

"It just folded the camper right up," said 17-year-old Lisa Culter, who heard sirens and ran out to see what was going on.

In Philadelphia, where Saturday was the hottest day in 29 years with a high of 103 degrees Fahrenheit (39 degrees Celsius), officials blamed two deaths on the heat, including that of one man found in his car.

"My clothes are all sticky and it's just yucky," said 8-year-old Shannon Perry, pulling unhappily at her halter top on a Philadelphia street corner.

Other deaths over the past week included: 14 in Wisconsin, 12 in Missouri, six in Indiana and Iowa; and one each in the Texas, Nebraska and Oklahoma. Illinois' toll was the highest: 61 deaths.

In Chicago, officials said most of the victims had suffered from heart problems, and heat stress contributed to the deaths.

"Oh, it's hot, you can't sleep," said 94-year-old Inez Anderson, who lives in a Chicago senior citizens' complex where few apartments have air conditioning and a man in his 70s died of heat stroke in an upstairs hallway.

In Washington, the landmark Washington Monument was shut down for a third day because the interior temperature rose into the 90s (above 32 degrees Celsius).



Agiel Vidal (left), 8, cools down in the spray from an open fire hydrant with her friends Amy Alimne (2nd left), 8, Jody Arolio (2nd right), 9, and Vanny Rodriguez (right), 9 in a Mexican-American neighbourhood of Chicago as record hot weather continued to hit the Midwest (AFP photo)

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World News



Flood victims prepare to cook their meal at a shelter camp in the capital's Rajarbagh area after fleeing their flooded homes. The overall flood situation either improved or remained static, but central and southern Bangladeshi districts were flooded overnight as water came down from the northern region into the Bay of Bengal (AFP photo)

Floods swamp Dhaka; mayor says take to the boats

DHAKA (R) — The mayor of Dhaka urged residents Sunday to get hold of boats and move to shelters quickly as floodwaters started swamping the city of nine million people from all sides. "Dhaka residents must buy or build boats so that they are not stranded in floods," Mayor Mohammad Hanif told municipal officials at a disaster management meeting. "Efforts will be made by authorities to bring all victims to shelters, but they must be prepared themselves too," he said. Mr. Hanif issued the appeal after low-lying areas of the city went knee-deep under water, bringing in rubbish and filth that might cause serious health problems. He ordered volunteers to stand by for emergency evacuation as weather monitors said heavy rains expected over the next few days could intensify the floods. Thousands of families from low-lying areas have already taken shelter with friends and relatives, but many more were reluctant to move and leave behind their property. Officials said Mr. Hanif wanted people prepared in advance after government relief efforts in 1988, when most of Dhaka was flooded, proved inadequate. More than 3,000 people died across the country in the 1988 floods. Many Dhaka survivors found their belongings either destroyed or looted when they returned from shelters. "People are still haunted by bad memories of the 1988," an official said. Mr. Hanif asked municipal workers to make bridges with bamboo poles so that people could get out of flood-hit residential blocks. On Sunday, residents were seen trudging through water to work, children fetching water from half-submerged wells and families loading cattle onto boats. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said Saturday the government would do everything it could to help flood victims. The floods, triggered by heavy rain and water sweeping in from India, have devastated 27 of Bangladesh's 64 administrative districts, and killed more than 100 people over the past few days, according to local officials. The latest deaths occurred Saturday in the northern district of Tangail where a woman and her two children drowned while trying to cross a river on a small boat, police said. Officials said the overall situation in the northern districts continued to improve in some areas Sunday as floodwaters slowly receded, but it would take at least a week before people had left their shelters. But conditions deteriorated sharply in the districts of Dhaka, Munshiganj, Madaripur and Brahmanbaria, they said. Relief supplies have been prepared, with the Red Crescent Society supplementing government efforts, the officials said. But it seemed impossible to provide food and drinking water to all the five million people marooned in the 27 districts, one official told Reuters. Officials said Sunday at least eight million people were affected by floods, which destroyed nearly 70,000 homes.

8 more killed in Karachi as peace talks continue

KARACHI (AFP) — Peace talks between the Pakistan government and Karachi's ethnic opposition group were adjourned until Monday after a three-hour session began with progress reported, while violence claimed eight more lives Sunday, officials said. Police said four people were shot dead by snipers in different parts of the city while another four bullet-riddled bodies were found dumped in sacks. Officials said tension prevailed in the suburb of Hasnabad, in eastern Malir district, because of a row between two groups of residents over the control of the Muslim shrine in the area. Paramilitary Rangers and police were patrolling the locality to prevent any clash between the rivals. Residents said dozens of families left their homes because they feared clashes. "Officials said Sunday's negotiating session focussed on efforts to restore peace to violence-plagued Karachi where around 2,000 people have died in political and sectarian troubles in the past 18 months. This was the third round since Tuesday of talks between the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), representing the large Urdu-speaking Mohajir community. "We are definitely making progress after every session," Zubair Akram, a member of the government negotiating team, told AFP. "Ajmal Dohivali, editor of a local Urdu language daily, beheading the five-member MQM team, told reporters: By holding talks we want to show the rest of the world that our party is not a terrorist party as portrayed by the government." The government blames MQM for much of the violence in Pakistan's largest city and commercial hub. But the group attributes the bloodshed to what it calls the government's anti-Mohajir policy. Mr. Dohivali said his party would not boycott the talks, but if the doors of negotiations were closed then violence was the only way left. His team had conveyed its complaints about operations by paramilitary Rangers and intelligence agencies against party members. The MQM has tabled an 18-point list of political and social demands to the government team led by Ms. Bhutto's Law Minister Nabi Dad Khan. Mr. Dohivali said the MQM was trying to assess the level of government sincerity. "We have told them that lip service will not work and the situation needs practical steps." Before the meeting, both sides expressed optimism about the outcome of the talks.

Pacific unions call for more anti-French action

SYDNEY (Agencies) — Australia, New Zealand and Pacific island unions Sunday resolved to step up action against France in protest at its decision to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific. The South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU) at a meeting in Brisbane pledged more protests outside French embassies and consulates and interference with French shipping and air services in the region. It also called for an end to Australian uranium exports to France and for unions around the world to support opposition to the French nuclear tests, a joint statement released Sunday said. SPOCTU said the Australian companies involved in the export of uranium to France should withdraw from their contracts as an act of solidarity with the nations of the South Pacific. France's decision last month to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific has caused a storm of protest in the region, culminating in widespread anti-France protests around the world Friday, Bastille Day. In a joint statement, SPOCTU Chairperson Vaoa Elisaisa, New Zealand council of Trade Unions President Ken Douglas and Australian Council of Trade Unions President Martin Ferguson said campaigns must focus first on the South Pacific and then move into the international community. "The French government must be put under extreme pressure to reverse the decision to resume nuclear tests," the statement said. "We therefore call on the trade union movements of the world to mobilise and support the actions of their counterparts in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific," it said. The unions said energy resources of Australia should cease uranium exports to France and said that if they refused the Australian government should be asked to intervene. Meanwhile, a group of 20 Polynesian ministers and politicians were expected to leave Papeete Sunday for the Mururoa atoll, site of planned French nuclear tests, for a "fishing trip" to demonstrate the safety of the site. The three day trip, which will include a tour of the nuclear test site, is designed to show "that the nuclear tests pose no threat to the environment or ecology," Tahitian President Gaston Flosse told AFP. The "fishing party" members are all from the Tahitian ruling party, with opposition politicians declining the invitation from Mr. Flosse. "It's not a three-day visit that's needed, it's an independent scientific study of several months to show the effects of the tests on the Polynesians and the environment," said Oscar Temaru, leader of the Tavini Huiraatira party which seeks independence for the French territory. The fishing party's three-day programme includes a swim in a lagoon, fishing for lobster and fish, diving and a barbecue finale. The Greenpeace activists protesting against the tests are "hans," Mr. Flosse said. A Greenpeace spokesman called the trips "public relations exercise." "From a scientific point of view, your exposure would not be significant for one or two days and eating half a fish does not prove anything," said Stephanie Mills, coordinator of the ecological group's campaign against the French nuclear tests. Mr. Flosse said he would organise similar visits for other local and regional groups. The leader of an Haitian opposition party demanding independence from France urged tourists Saturday to boycott Tahiti in protest against the decision by Paris to restart nuclear tests. "Stay away from Tahiti, stay away from Tahiti," Oscar Temaru, leader of the Tavini Huiraatira Party, told reporters. "Boycott this country." He also repeated calls for islands in the region to boycott the South Pacific Games scheduled for Tahiti next month.



Crewmembers from the Greenpeace protest vessel Rainbow Warrior II are rowed ashore to a huge welcome in Papeete after they returned here from their protest mission to the test site at Mururoa. The banner in background reads "Children and Peace-walk together" (AFP photo)

Rebels blast Sri Lankan Navy ship; offensive enter 2nd week



A government soldier quenches his thirst from a bucket of water offered by Tamil woman in northern Jaffna against Tamil Tiger rebels in northern Jaffna peninsula (AFP photo)

COLOMBO (AFP) — A Tamil Tiger suicide squad blew up a navy command and surveillance ship in northern Sri Lanka Sunday, killing three sailors as an army offensive against them entered its second week, the military said. Frogmen from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) set off two powerful blasts and crippled the 1,500-tonne vessel, the Edithara, at the Kankesanthurai Navy port blocking its entrance, a military source said. Shortly before the blasts went off, an Israeli-built Dvora gunboat destroyed three LTTE speed boats to the northeast of the port of Point Pedro, killing at least 18 rebel cadres, the sources said. "It was probably a diversionary tactic by the terrorists to keep us occupied while their (suicide) Black Sea Tiger frogmen got under the Edithara," the source said. The vessel was taking in water and slowly going down. The daring attack came as the army's operation "Leap Forward" entered its second week Sunday with troops consolidating in a 78-square kilometre area captured inside the LTTE-dominated Jaffna peninsula. The Edithara played a key role in providing logistics and ferrying thousands of troops to launch the Leap Forward offensive a week ago. It also served as a "mother ship" for patrol craft and gunboats used for anti-LTTE surveillance. The LTTE's clandestine radio, the Voice of Tigers, claimed responsibility for the suicide attack. An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) vessel sank at Kankesanthurai after hitting a mine last month. The military blamed the Tigers for the attack but the ICRC said it was not sure who was responsible. The navy had lost another command ship at the same port last August. The Tamil Tigers ended six months of peace talks with the Colombo government on April 19 by carrying out an identical suicide strike on the northwestern Trincomalee port against two navy gunboats, killing nearly 20 people. The Tiger radio Sunday said that 63 of their cadres were killed during a Friday counter offensive to retake seven villages lost to the army which is using 10,000 troops for its ongoing offensive. Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran ordered the retaliatory attack code named "Leap of the Tiger" to dislodge the army from their new positions but military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe denied any pullout. The casualties in Friday's attack led by Tiger suicide units known as Black Tigers, were listed as 33 soldiers killed and 95 wounded. The army claimed 62 rebels killed, one less than admitted by the LTTE. Tigers claimed to have killed 100 troops. The army defence lines had moved within six kilometres of Jaffna town, the symbol of Tamil separatism and the capital of the LTTE's fiefdom where they have their own administration complete with courts and police. Travellers from the embattled region told reporters at the northern town of Vavuniya on the mainland that black flags went up in Jaffna and the LTTE's public address systems played sombre music to mourn the Tigers who died Friday. An LTTE truck loaded with explosives blew up accidentally at Thavadu in Jaffna, killing several senior LTTE cadres and wounding civilians but the exact casualties were not immediately known, travellers said. Defence analysts said there was an upsurge in rebel suicide attacks, probably because the guerrillas feared an imminent military onslaught to take the densely populated town of Jaffna. However, analysts say Friday's heavy fighting may have put the brakes on an immediate advance especially with the loss of a ground attack aircraft and the blasting of the navy supply craft Sunday.

Kashmiri police establish contact with kidnappers



From left to right Julie, wife of Keith Mangan of Britain, Catherine, wife of Paul Wells of Britain, Jane, wife of Donald Hutchings of the United States and Anne, wife of Dirk Hassert of Germany appealing once again to Muslim militants in Srinagar to release their husbands. The militants are threatening to kill the hostages if Indian authorities did not release 21 jailed rebels (AFP photo)

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Kashmir police have made "indirect" contact with Muslim guerrillas holding five Western tourists hostage a day before a deadline for their threatened killing, a police source said Sunday. A senior police official said here that a team of police negotiators had established contact with the Al Faran group which has claimed responsibility for seizing the two Britons, an American, a German and a Norwegian. The rebel outfit, meanwhile, released two colour photographs of the captives here Sunday showing them sitting inside a hut and standing on a hilly terrain with a glacier and pine trees. The captives, who were dressed in heavy woollens and sported stubble, appeared in good health but were surrounded by 10 armed militants in the photograph taken outdoors. The police official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told AFP that the team would begin talks with the abductors before the expiry of a Moody evening deadline set by the rebels for the release of 21 jailed colleagues. "We are not rigid and are always ready for negotiations," the official said. "We want the safety of the foreigners who are very important to us." He said the official negotiators were headed by senior police officer Mohammad Amin Shah who held talks with the rebel abductors of two British trekkers seized in Kashmir last year. The pair were freed unharmed.

Burmese dissident to attend 1st public ceremony



Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the crowd outside her home. Burmese opposition movements are trying to keep public attention focussed on their problems with the ruling junta in Rangoon despite international excitement over the release of the charismatic leader (AFP photo)

RANGOON (AP) — Burmese dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi said Sunday she will attend this week's Martyrs Day ceremony, her first major public appearance since her release from house arrest. That may worry the military authorities, given Mrs. Suu Kyi's immense popularity, and they are likely to take extra security precautions. The ceremony near the Shwedagon Pagoda — one of Burma's best known tourist sites — commemorates the 1947 assassinations of Mrs. Suu Kyi's father, Aung San, and other heroes of Burmese independence from Britain. Mrs. Suu Kyi did not give details, except to say she would return home after the ceremony. Mrs. Suu Kyi, 50, has mostly remained at her residence, meeting with supporters, diplomats and journalists, since her release last Monday from six years of detention for having led huge pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988. The military crushed the demonstrations with hundreds of deaths. Government officials, foreign diplomats and usually hundreds of ordinary Burmese attend the martyrs day event, which includes a wreath-laying ceremony at the Martyrs Mausoleum and a religious ceremony at the city hall. Mrs. Suu Kyi last attended in 1988, after returning from many years abroad. She boycotted the 1989 ceremony and instead planned to march to the Mausoleum with members of the pro-democracy parties. She cancelled that, however, and the next day the military placed her under house arrest under a law "safeguarding the state from the danger of subversionists." Her elder brother, Aung San Oo, an American citizen living in the United States, laid the wreath at the 1994 ceremony. It was not known whether he would attend this year's event. Mrs. Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, has been speaking with the few hundred supporters who have crowded outside her lakeside home each day since her release. On Sunday, she spoke to a crowd of about 400. None was seen leaving despite a monsoon rain. She also met with about 40 members of her extended family for the first time as a group since her release. They all joined in a Buddhist ceremony commemorating one of Aung San's brothers, who was assassinated with him. On Saturday, she went to the residence of Japanese Ambassador Takakishi Tajima for lunch with him, Japanese journalists said. Details were not available. Mrs. Suu Kyi's party easily won a general election in 1990, but the military refused to let it take power. Officers have said they will not transfer power to civilians until a new constitution has been drafted, but they have given no timetable. Since her release, Mrs. Suu Kyi has taken a non-confrontational stand toward the authorities and urged them to join her in talks on national reconciliation. But articles in recent days in the official press have stated that the military has no intention of giving up power.

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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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Cycle of unbroken events

THE MINISTRY of Education's announcement on Thursday of a 49 per cent passing rate in this year's Tawjihi examinations comes as part of a regular cycle in educational events from rote-learning to exam-taking in a routine that remains much unchanged over the years.

The fact is that Tawjihi results reflect an unbroken trend in the educational cycle which needs urgent revision. While our national curriculum spoonfeeds information to our students, bogs them down with hour after hour of rote-learning, and note-taking of antiquated facts, running on the fuel of their short-term ability to repeat those same facts, the final results of the Tawjihi have the job of pinpointing each student's future career. In other words, those who attained results of over 90 per cent (just over 3,000 students) have their future decided for them; the rest are not so certain.

All is not well there. Those who are lucky enough to survive the arduous system our curriculum has to offer scurry off to sign up at medical or engineering schools. The middle-rangers, those whose abilities were not enhanced by our schooling system, opt for the less specialised subjects. Students entering the teaching profession are of the latter category, trapped by a system that has taught them to be less optimistic, less confident, less enterprising, less analytical. Nor are they the revered professionals they ought to be. Nurtured by a system that has failed to stimulate their minds, their pockets and their souls, they are now and will continue to be our children's teachers. It is they, through no fault of their own, who turn the same educational wheel of fortune, year after year.

The fact is, again, that this course of events is not compatible with the times we find ourselves in. The government spends 10 per cent of its budget on education. The Ministry of Education foresees no significant changes in curricula development. What then? Can we at least break the cycle of events by investing in postgraduate teacher training courses run by specialists who advocate an integrated, global approach that centres on the students' ability to process and cognitively acquire relevant and experience-based information?

In a scenario like that, we can at least look forward to the churning out of students who are confidently able to make sense of the world around us, and who are responsible and committed to the tasks their community demands of them.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

MUNES Al Razzaz, a writer in Al Ra'i daily, strongly criticised the Western powers and the United Nations for allowing the situation in Bosnia to deteriorate and for failing to come to the aid of the innocent and defenceless population. Had the Serbs known that the U.N. peacekeepers would act in a different manner and protect the Bosnians, they would not have dared to attack, said the writer, who said that the Serbs realised too well that none of the Western powers' interests is endangered by their aggression and therefore none of these powers would take action against them. While massacring the civilians and committing atrocities, the Serbs are quite sure they will escape it with impunity and will not face any wrath from the world community, he continued. As long as the Bosnian question is not affecting the Western powers' interests, these powers are indifferent to the human tragedy caused by the Serbian aggression, said the writer.

A WRITER in Al Dustour daily said that the municipal elections had brought to light the difference between Jordanian women in the rural regions and those living comfortably in the major cities. Mohammad Subeishi said that the fact that the women in the rural regions and small towns have been elected to the local councils, reflects their efforts and their serious orientation towards serving their local communities. The elections have proved that the women in Khirbet Al Wahadneh, Mahes, Yaraqa and other remote regions have been working diligently and that their efforts were rewarded but that those in the capital had sufficed themselves with mere demands that women should be given meaningful roles in the leadership of their communities but not taking practical steps to achieve that goal, said the writer. He said that Her Royal Highness Princess Basma deserves congratulations for infusing in the rural women the spirit of challenge and diligence in pursuing efforts to serve their communities and carry out voluntary work that will benefit their country.

Israel's military industry feels the bite of new era

By P.R. Kumaraswamy

ARMS EXPORTS play a pivotal role in Israel's foreign and defence policies. For long, and with a reasonable degree of success, arms exports and other forms of security assistance have occupied an important position in Israel's search for international accommodation and acceptance. This paved the way for unconventional developments and military relations flourished, even when there were fundamental political differences. And the post-Madrid diplomatic successes in Asia and Africa and the renewal of ties with Eastern European states have opened new avenues and potential customers.

Its limited internal market and its perennial search for qualitative superiority compel Israel to export arms to support and subsidise its costly and at times ambitious programme of weapons development. Unlike many of its competitors, Israel has managed to marginally increase its arms sales over recent years, earning more than \$1bn per year in the process. Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), Israel's flagship company, continues to post annual sales around \$1.5bn. Along with Israel Military Industries (IMI) and Rafael, it retains its position among the world's 100 leading arms manufacturers. At their height, military industries constituted a quarter of Israel's industrial exports and employed a quarter of its industrial labour force.

Currently all the major military industries in Israel are undergoing severe restructuring programmes. In the mid-1980s, Israel's military industry was employing around 60,000 workers; by 1990 it was less than 45,000. This recession can be attributed to various national and international factors, such as inflation, cancellation of the ambitious Lavi fighter project and general recession in the international arms trade. Though the world is not free of conflict, the demands are different. The proliferation of civil wars and ethnic clashes does generate a market for small arms but form an Israeli point of view they are not as profitably as advanced weapons and technology. Domestic political changes in Iran, South Africa and Latin America have adversely affected Israel's arms exports. Since the end of the Cold War most advanced weapons have become available from Eastern Europe and the market has become more competitive. The longer gestation period needed for civilian conversion has also hampered Israel's military industry.

State-owned giants in trouble
Even though hundreds of firms are actively involved in defence-related industries, Israel's arms export market is dominated by three state-owned corporations, namely IAI, IMI and Rafael. Besides being the principal arms exporters, they are also the backbone of Israel's technological advancement. Most of the other firms, either affiliated to the Histadrut labour federation or owned by private individuals, revolve around these three giants.

Ever since 1981-82, when they passed \$500,000, exports have become an important component of IAI's sales; at its zenith the company had a workforce of around 23,000. It continues to be Israel's largest industrial enterprise, the largest single employer, the largest

single industrial exporter and the largest liability for the Israeli government. Following the cancellation of the Lavi programme in 1987, there were as many as 3,000 job losses at IAI alone and by early 1995 its workforce stood at 13,500. Likewise during its heydays in 1985, IMI employed 14,500 personnel, a decade later 5,000.

Their impressive sales and export figures do not reflect the health of the defence firms. In 1990 IAI exported \$1.4bn worth of arms and yet its net profit stood at only \$12.9m. Following the marginal profit of \$2bn in 1991, the trend swiftly reversed in 1992. After selling \$1.6bn worth of arms, it posted a net loss of \$150m. Many believe that had it been a private company IMI would have gone into receivership long ago.

All the firms are undergoing serious restructuring programmes. The pattern is familiar and every recovery plan involves significant wage cuts, increased productivity, shorter hours, reduced fringe benefits, a moratorium on pay rises, closure of unprofitable factories and units, hefty injections of taxpayer money, guaranteed defence ministry orders and redundancies.

Though Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin claims that he is not prepared to put additional resources into firms run along "Bolshevik lines", it is impossible for any of the firms to survive without substantial government funding.

Moreover, some of the firms are also suffering from managerial difficulties. Mr. Rabin once offered to sell IAI and IMI for a song "if somebody can be found capable of managing them." The wholesale dismissal in early 1995 of

the IMI management, including its chairman, former chief-of-staff Dan Shomron, is an indication of this problem.

The military is Israel's largest owner of real estate, with huge tracts of land all over the country. In the centre of Tel Aviv alone its land property is valued at over \$100m. Optimum utilisation and commercial exploitation of this resource would go a long way to alleviate some of its financial troubles.

Unlike others, Rafael, or the Armaments Development Authority, Israel's third largest arms producer, is part of the defence ministry. Responsible for research, design and development of new weapons and systems, Rafael plays a pivotal role in Israel's search for qualitative superiority. Its highly sensitive status is a major stumbling block for introducing far reaching structural changes vital for its continued viability. While privatisation has considerable support in the ministry, its employees fear that such a move would destroy its role as a national laboratory addressing the army's critical demands.

Following prolonged deliberations, hesitation and legal wrangles, in January 1995 the government appointed five committees to plan the reorganisation of Rafael into a state-owned company.

Swallowing cash, laying off workers
A harsher picture lies beneath the impressive statistics, aggressive sales promotion and publicity over "proven ability" of the major companies. All three are under acute financial crisis. Sales levels have been maintained with substantial government largesse

and considerable job losses. Direct government support for the recovery plans runs to millions of dollars. Nearly \$300m of the 1994 supplementary budget went to the three recovery plans. IAI, IMI and Rafael alone have lost nearly 30,000 jobs since 1985. If one adds layoffs in other firms, such as Histadrut-owned Tadiran, the losses are enormous.

With its limited industrial base and internal market, Israel cannot afford to pursue a whole range of defence production. Like some of the developing countries, Israel's search for self-sufficiency in defence production has ignored compelling economic realities. Even advanced industrialised countries no longer pursue major projects on a national scale but rather through joint collaboration. Moreover, its dependence on the U.S. for financial and technological support undermines the Israeli drive for self-sufficiency.

Accorded on self-sufficiency and indigenous defence production, Israel's military-industrial complex has been indifferent to the economic implications. For long the defence industries thrived on huge and guaranteed orders from the defence ministry or the army. Uncertainty over continued U.S. military aid is complicated by the peace process. Any Israeli redeployment from the West Bank would further strain the defence budget, and if one adds the question of withdrawal from the Golan Heights the cost would be astronomical. Under these circumstances Israel has neither the ability nor willingness to subsidise its defence industries.

Middle East International.

on the British cannot be persuaded to change their minds... then I think we are starting to go down the slippery slope from whence we came," he told journalists in Belfast.

His words carried echoes of a warning he gave last month when he said violence could erupt — he was careful not to say "from where" — if there is no progress towards all-party talks by the first anniversary of the IRA truce on Sept. 1.

There were signs on Tuesday that Britain might be moving closer to a release of guerrilla prisoners which might buy time to nudge the peace process forward, political sources said.

Britain's Northern Ireland office said on Thursday that it was studying the question of remission for close to 1,000 men and women jailed in the 25-year conflict.

Their early release is a key demand of both Republicans, who want a united Ireland, and so-called loyalists who are determined the province will remain British and nudge no closer towards any kind of joint rule by London and Dublin.

But the crucial obstacle to the next stage of the peace process, launched with an Anglo-Irish plan in December 1993, is the issue of decommissioning IRA and loyalist arms, a demand Britain says has to be seen to be carried out before either can be invited to all-party talks on the future.

"Movement on prisoners might keep the peace process on track and take some of the heat out of Republican anger for the time being, but it wouldn't get us any closer to solving Britain's insistence on decommissioning," an Irish official said.

Senior Anglo-Irish officials are working on proposals to break the deadlock by keeping the arms issue off the agenda for the time being, the official added.

Moderate Catholic leader John Hume, a key player in the peace process, has called for an international commission to be set up under the auspices of a third country to look at the problem.

This would not meet British insistence that no-one at the negotiating table should keep guns outside the door, but it has some of the elements of a compromise, the official said.

The Irish government is increasingly worried that the key item on its political agenda is bogged down at crossroads and might not get moving again soon, risking another period of war and conflict on its borders.

Fault lines remain in N. Ireland

By Peter Millership
Reuter

BELFAST — Northern Ireland held its breath as thousands of Protestants took to the streets this week to mark a 300-year-old victory over Catholics. But not a shot was fired and apart from some street disturbances, the fragile peace process held.

The 18,000-strong British army stayed in the barracks where it retreated after Republican and Protestant gunmen declared ceasefires last year. Violence was confined to bottles, stones and police plastic bullets.

But the 300-year-old Protestant rite of annual parades, seen by Catholics as triumphalist, exposed fault lines in the 10-month peace as the province approaches the first anniversary of an Irish-Republican Army (IRA) ceasefire.

Tension between Protestants and Catholics who support Irish integration still runs high and a deadlock over IRA arms caches, which has all but stopped the peace process, could lead to a return to guns and bombs.

Gerry Adams, president of the Irish Republican Army's political wing Sinn Fein, accused Britain of slowing the process by taking a "tactical stance" in sticking to demands for a handover of IRA guerrilla weapons before all-party talks.

"If the British cannot be persuaded to change their minds... then I think we are starting to go down the slippery slope from whence we came," he told journalists in Belfast.

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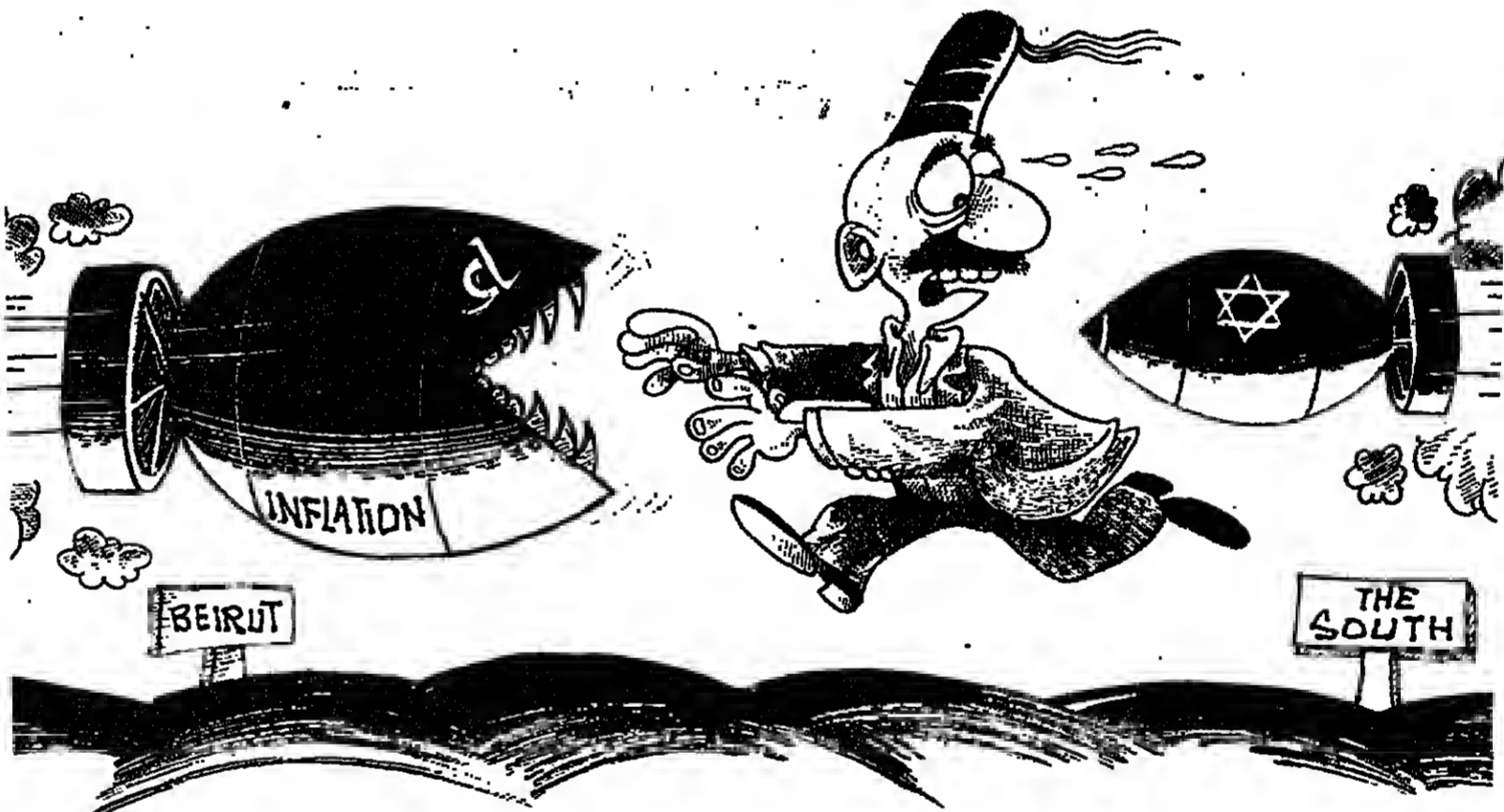
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M. KAHIL



Yeltsin's health fuels speculation on future of presidency

By Timothy Heritage
Reuter

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin's heart problems looked set on last week to fuel speculation that he is no longer fit enough to rule Russia and increase uncertainty over whether he will seek reelection next year.

Aides to the 64-year-old Kremlin chief, who was described as fit enough to keep working after being taken to hospital, have long dismissed conjecture that he is seriously ill, has a drinking problem or that his mental faculties are declining.

But Mr. Yeltsin's refusal to say if he will run again when his five-year term expires next June and a visible decline in his appearance since he was elected have heightened doubts over his ability and desire to govern.

Yeltsin appears not to have decided if he will run and he's likely to keep us in

suspense until next spring," Alexei Pushkov, a columnist for the weekly Moscow News, told Reuters. "He probably wants to run but he has to measure this desire against his health, his ability to run the country for another five years," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin enjoyed huge popularity when he became president in June 1991 and boosted his image two months later by helping put down a hardline coup attempt against reformist Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

But his popularity has sunk from a peak at the end of 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up, and hit rock bottom when he sent troops to crush Chechnya's independence drive last December.

Speculation that he may be ill and his rumoured — but often-denied — taste for alcohol have been heightened by a number of shaky public appearances.

The man who embodied Russia's striving for democracy when he climbed on to a tank to address a crowd during the 1991 coup attempt has been seen in recent months stumbling up stairs, slurring his words and walking stiffly.

"The state of the president's health is a serious fact of the country's political life," leftist politician Vasily Lipitsky said. "As for him seeking a second term, as of today I have some doubts he will do so, but only time will tell."

The effect Mr. Yeltsin's health problems will have on his popularity in a country which likes underdogs is unclear.

"The media will speculate on how his health affects his ability to rule but his illness is likely to increase compassion and concern for him among the public," Mr. Pushkov said.

Other observers say Mr. Yeltsin is far from finished. They applauded his decision to sack three top officials last month, in a con-

cession to avert a crisis in parliament, because he opted for compromise and democratic methods rather than force.

"This is a good example that Yeltsin's political resources are not exhausted," military analyst Dmitry Trenin said, noting the difference from 1993 when Mr. Yeltsin sent tanks to bludgeon hostile deputies into submission when they occupied parliament.

Mr. Yeltsin's wife, Naina, says he should not run for family reasons. Some observers fear elections may be postponed altogether if he decides he has no chance of winning.

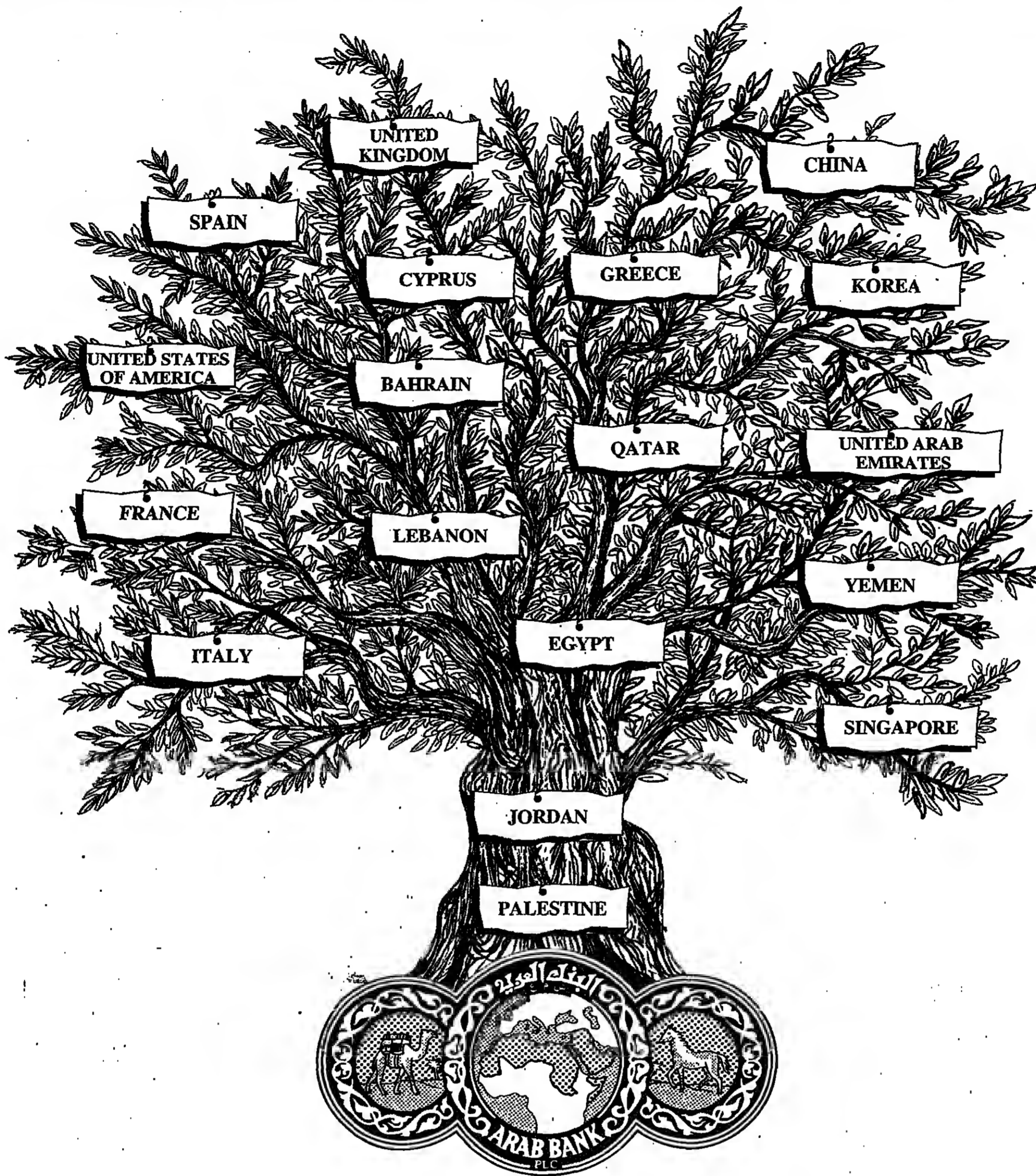
Mr. Yeltsin at least has a carefully groomed candidate waiting in the wings in Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. He won wide public support by negotiating an end to a hostage crisis in June and is personally spearheading peace efforts in Chechnya. "I'd be surprised to see Mr. Chernomyrdin run against Mr. Yeltsin but he'd

be seen as consolidating stability if Mr. Yeltsin stood down," said Michael McFaul, a political analyst at the Moscow Office of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Other candidates could include Army General Alexander Lebed, nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, liberal Grigory Yavlinsky, cyc surgeon Syvostoslav Fyodorov and Mr. Gorbachev — a rank outsider.

Gen. Lebed, an opponent of the Chechenya campaign, is seen as a tough talker who would crack down on crime, but has little political experience. Mr. Fyodorov's success in improving the sight of thousands of people has earned him good popularity ratings.

Mr. Zhirinovskiy, who fared well in the last parliamentary election in December 1993, is expected to muster votes if he runs. But most observers say any nationalist or communist candidate would be unlikely to win the presidential race.



ARAB BANK

Established in Jerusalem 1930

The 65th Anniversary of Arab Bank

on the morning of 14 July 1930 the Arab Bank was established in Jerusalem with a paid up capital of 15000 Palestinian Pounds (about US\$ 75000). Arab Bank's head office was moved to Amman and the bank was reincorporated in Jordan. This year, the Arab Bank celebrates its 65 anniversary. It is a public shareholding company owned by 3000 shareholders from all Arab countries. Currently, Arab Bank Group has a worldwide diversified network of more than 300 branches. It is one of the principal financial institutions in the Arab world and ranks among the leading international banks in terms of equity, earnings and assets. It is engaged in providing a wide variety of financial services to individuals, corporate and institutional customers, government agencies and other international financial institutions. These services include retail banking, private banking, trade financing, merchant banking, commercial lending, real estate lending and international banking.

Sister Institutions, Subsidiaries

Arab Bank	Percentage of Ownership	Arab Bank	Percentage of Ownership
Arab Bank (Switzerland) Ltd. - Zurich, Geneva	100%	Arab Tunisian Bank - Tunis	64%
Arab Bank Australia Ltd. - Sydney	100%	Arab Bank Maroc - Morocco	50%
Arab Bank (Austria) AG - Vienna	100%	Oman Arab Bank - Oman	49%
Arab Bank AG - Frankfurt / Germany	100%	Arab National Bank - Saudi Arabia	40%
Finance, Accountancy, Mohassaba S.A. - Geneva	100%		

Economy

EU foreign ministers to tackle trade issues

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union foreign ministers will briefly drag their attention from the Bosnian crisis on Monday and turn to an array of trade and cooperation issues, diplomats said at the weekend.

The ministers are due to sign an interim trade deal with Russia, a cooperation pact with Vietnam and a trade and aid accord with Tunisia.

They will review progress to date in negotiating trade deals with Israel, Morocco and Egypt, decide to send the European Commission on a mission to draw up a new accord with Chile and discuss the state of talks on a cooperation pact with Croatia.

The ministers will take a first look at formal bids by Romania and Slovakia to add their names to the steadily lengthening list of applicants to join the bloc, and hold special side meetings with Hungary and Poland which, like Slovakia and Romania, have what is known as Europe accords containing the promise of eventual membership.

Following that, the ministers will discuss the work now getting under way to revolutionise the relationship between the EU and the United States.

The interim deal with Russia, contains the trade elements of the broader partnership and cooperation accord between the EU and Moscow that is trundling slowly through the process of national ratification.

The interim deal has been held up for months in a bid to get Russia to negotiate a peace settlement in Chechnya. The EU's summit in Cannes last month finally decided that Moscow had done enough to warrant the deal being signed.

Signing the cooperation deal with Hanoi will be yet another signal of the country's emergence from the relative isolation that followed the Vietnam War. The United States declared last week that it too was normalising relations.

The so-called Euro-Mediterranean accord with Tunisia is part of the bloc's push to improve relations with the non-EU Mediterranean countries.

Similar negotiations are in progress with Morocco and Egypt but they are still a long way from completion.

Oranges, apple juice and pears are now the only obstacles in the way of a comprehensive trade deal with Israel to replace the one that has been running since 1975.

Spain has a problem with imports of oranges, Austria is worried about apple juice and France fears for its Foie Gras Pate industry, diplomats said.

Little progress has been made in negotiation of a cooperation pact with Croatia which was given the green light only last month.

"Croatia has not been exactly friendly towards some of its neighbours recently, so there has been no progress in negotiating the accord," one diplomat said, adding that little would come on the matter from Monday's meeting.

Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan will tell the ministers that a special Sherpa Group was being set up including top officials from the European Commission, EU president Spain and the United States to deal with the complex and often strained Transatlantic relationship.

He will also spell out the broad lines along which he thinks the relationship should run — an issue that is due to be finally settled at an EU-US summit in December.

EU, Russia to agree on key accord

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union and Russia finalise a key trade pact on Monday while NATO opens landmark talks on a "special relationship," signalling the West's willingness to move on following Moscow's crackdown in Chechnya.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozhevnikov will meet his 15 EU counterparts and attend a ceremony for the formal exchange of an interim trade accord to give Moscow some badly-needed trade concessions.

The pact, a stop-gap measure covering trade aspects of a broader EU-Russia cooperation agreement currently awaiting ratification, was put on ice after Moscow's harsh military crackdown in Chechnya.

The West's criticism of human rights abuse in the area and NATO's plans to expand its membership to former communist Central and Eastern Europe created a chill in relations, prompting warnings a "cold peace" was replacing the "cold war."

Now all sides want to turn the page on the Chechen chapter and focus on new ties that secure the end of the cold war.

The EU says Moscow has made enough concessions, essentially by opening peace talks with Chechen leaders, to meet the terms of key clauses on the respect of human rights now contained in all accords signed by the union and third parties.

The NATO-Russia talks at the alliance's headquarters only a few kilometres from where the EU ministers meet are the first in a series expected to lead to a new, all-embracing treaty by the end of the year.

"The aim is to have a NATO-Russia agreement in December," one NATO source said.

But neither set of talks will be plain-sailing.

The current crisis in Bosnia could well wipe the smile off faces at the EU's back-slapping session.

Mr. Kozhevnikov is set to tell EU members Moscow can do nothing to persuade Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to exert pressure on his Bosnian kinsmen to call off a current offensive against U.N.-declared "safe areas" and accept a peace plan.

At NATO, Russia's envoy to Brussels is set to repeat Moscow's opposition to alliance enlargement and hint it could lead to the end of an accord on reducing conventional forces in Europe.

After months of hesitation, Moscow signed up to NATO's Partnership For Peace (PFP) programme on May 31. Mr. Kozhevnikov initiated an individual partnership programme and a second document offering an enhanced dialogue on security issues.

But since then there has been no progress and NATO is keen to entice the Russian military into some PFP exercises to give the relationship some meaning.

Meanwhile, in Geneva Russia's return to respectability will be further underlined when a working group studying its long-standing application to join the World Trade Organisation finally convenes for the first time.

French oil deal with Iran undermines U.S. ban

DUBAI (R) — Iran is delighted with a major deal with a French oil company that Gulf sources said was clear proof of what the oil industry had believed all along — a U.S. ban on investment and trade with Iran will simply not work.

Iran and the French oil group Total SA announced on Thursday an agreement to develop two key offshore oil and gas fields originally awarded to a U.S. oil firm that was later forced by Washington to abandon its Iran links.

"We believed from the beginning the ban won't work," a senior Western oil executive said of President Bill Clinton's executive order last May banning U.S. companies and their affiliates from trading or investing with Iran.

"There are plenty of people out there willing to do business with Iran. If it wasn't Total, it would have been someone else. Iran is much too important to ignore on the basis of American allegations that have not convinced everyone," he added.

A State Department spokesman said on Friday Washington had a "very deep disagreement" with France over the deal under which Total will replace Houston-based Conoco Inc. as a unit of the U.S. giant Dupont Co.

Industry officials in Paris said Total, France's second biggest oil group, would not have signed the Iran deal without at least tacit approval from French President Jacques Chirac.

The French company, also with a government nod, has clinched a deal with Iran's neighbour Iraq to develop an oilfield there despite strenuous U.S. efforts to maintain a stringent U.N. embargo on oil dealings with Baghdad.

The firm says the deal will only become operative once the U.N. lifts economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Gulf sources said other Western companies were talking to Iran even before it clinched the deal with Total under which the French firm will invest \$600 million in developing the Sirri fields to return for one third of the eventual production.

The ground-breaking Sirri deal is the first of its kind with a Western company since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, opening the way for the return of oil majors to a country they consider among the most promising in the Middle East.

"This aspect has been largely obscured by the political controversy. The majors have for years been looking at ways of returning to their old stomping grounds in Iran," one Gulf oilman said.

Washington says the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch/Shell group abandoned its bid for the Sirri fields in response to U.S. pressure but the company itself attributed its withdrawal to what it saw as tough Iranian terms.

Oil industry sources said Shell had apparently tried to obtain easier terms than those in the Conoco deal — which Iranian oil sources said were the basis for the Total agreement.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati described the Total deal as "a big step towards the expansion of bilateral ties" with France. Industry sources said that it did indeed put French firms in a strong competitive position.

"France is clearly looking at strategic, long-term interests in its dealings with Iran and Iraq," one Gulf diplomat said.

Iran, OPEC's biggest oil producer after Saudi Arabia, also owns the world's second largest reserves of natural gas, considered by many as the environmentally friendly fuel of the future.

Washington has so far failed to persuade key European and Japanese allies to join its Iran embargo imposed after charges that Tehran is developing nuclear weapons, sponsors terrorism and is trying to undermine the Middle East peace process.

But the Gulf sources said the problem is that some U.S. allies believe most of the charges are unproven, that such embargoes rarely work and that squeezing the troubled Iranian economy further would only encourage a resurgence of hardline Islamic radicalism in Iran.

Iran oil minister details French oil deal

TEHRAN (R) — The deal clinched by France's Total SA to develop two Iranian oil and gas fields will be the model for 11 others planned with foreign companies, Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh told Tehran Radio on Sunday.

The Total agreement, the first of its kind with a foreign oil company since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, replaces an identical deal with the U.S. Conoco oil company that was forced to drop out by the U.S. President Bill Clinton's embargo on trade and investment with Iran.

Mr. Aghazadeh said the \$600 million deal to bring on stream the Sirri E and A offshore oil and gas fields set "a proper model for international contractors to carry out Iran's 11 other energy projects allowed for in the second five year plan (1995-2000)," he added.

According to the minister, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has invited international contractors to visit Tehran in the near future to get familiar with the 11 energy projects that will be modelled on the Total deal.

"The value of (the Sirri) contract is \$600 million plus bank interest and contract

was based on the buy-back principle — where the contractor recoups his investment plus an agreed reasonable proportion of the field's oil or gas output.

He said this was the first agreement of its kind since the 1979 revolution when foreign partners were pushed out of all but minor service contracts for NIOC.

The deal "in all its dimensions were the same as previous deal," the minister said referring to Conoco deal.

A minimum of 30 per cent of the project was to be carried out by Iranian companies, the minister said.

Real costs of Total will be repaid, after production begins in three years time, from the field itself in a period of five years," the minister said.

Mr. Aghazadeh said the gas from the fields would be exported to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

"All the estimated production of 100 million cubic feet (per day) of gas of Sirri region, according to the contract, is sold to Total for 25 years with the same price as previous contract (Conoco) which will be exported to Dubai," Mr. Aghazadeh said.

The minister said the con-

Algeria's foreign debt increases

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria's foreign debt stood at \$29.4 billion at the end of last year, a 3.7 billion increase on the previous year, a Bank of Algeria official said.

The bank's foreign debt director said the increase was due in part to new credits and the fall of the dollar.

Some 50 per cent of the debt was owed to the European Union, he said.

On Monday Algeria is to discuss a second rescheduling of its foreign debt with the Paris Club of creditor nations.

Meanwhile, Algerian Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi met the chairman of the South Korean car manufacturer Daewoo, Kim Woo-Choon, to discuss investment possibilities in Algeria, the El Moudjahid paper reported Sunday.

It said their meeting Saturday came nine months after Daewoo's representative in Algeria, Dae Huan Kang, was shot dead east of Algiers in an attack attributed to the extremist Armed Islamic Groups (GIA).

Algeria is trying to encourage foreign investment, despite three and a half years of violence, sparked by the annulment of general elections which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Gulf Arab states meet to align tariffs

DUBAI (R) — Gulf Arab officials met in Saudi Arabia on Sunday to work on unifying their tariffs, part of plans to set up a common market and a crucial element in negotiations with their European Union (EU) trading partners.

Officials from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Qatar discussed an agenda comprising more than 500 types of commodities which they hope to classify under three types of tariff categories, Gulf news agencies said.

Categories include those products which will be exempt from duties, basic goods, and other goods.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JULY 17, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid a confrontation today over money matters, and then tonight you can get a clear picture of the whole situation.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You and your partner are both stubborn over some issue today, so say that you will sleep on it before coming to a definite decision.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You find it very difficult to get a fellow associate to cooperate today, so handle your tasks accurately and forget about theirs.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't disagree with a good friend today, and you will save time and energy and save the friendship.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A bigwig and a family tie could disagree during the daytime but keep out of it, and it will soon blow over.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't take advice from outsiders where routine tasks are concerned, but try to improve them sensibly by yourself.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get busy and pay your pressing bills today, and don't find fault where there is none. Improve your credit situation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Some responsibility of long standing has you so concerned that you could fail to handle some emergency, so clear up.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't try to do more tasks than you can handle today just to get out of a temporary bind or you could ruin your health.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't enter into an disagreement between a family tie and a good friend, or you could lose them both.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be certain to handle obligations at home before you get out into the business world. Try to please a family tie.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There are important meetings to attend even though you may have to leave your career activities for a while.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"You must have been drooling in your sleep again. The pillows are soaked and I dreamt I was the Little Mermaid!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PUROG
RAWLD
GABLEE
DARAMA

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LINGO PRONE HIATUS MOHAIR
 Answer: Breeding rabbits becomes this — HARE RAISING

THE Daily Crossword by Frances Ragus

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ACROSS

- 1 Traffic snarls
- 5 Slight error
- 10 Laundry
- 14 Fit of shivering
- 15 Issues with authority
- 16 — pednnda
- 17 Aromatic beverage
- 18 Autobiographical sketches
- 19 Space
- 20 Nurtured
- 21 Sch. subj.
- 22 "Golden Boy" dramatist
- 23 "— golden"
- 26 Lose firmness
- 29 Legal point
- 30 Spring holidays
- 34 Askew
- 36 Warm over
- 37 Oriental servant
- 38 Jason's ship
- 39 Grayish green
- 42 Profession
- 44 Requiring maximum ability
- 46 Hood's weapon
- 47 Netherlands city
- 48 "— is bliss"
- 51 Sluffs
- 54 Squealed
- 56 Huckleberry's transportation
- 59 "Clair de —"
- 60 Stage whisper
- 61 Nautical term
- 62 Italian wine region
- 63 Penny pincher
- 64 Enslie
- 65 Voice votes
- 66 Copycats
- 67 Test

DOWN

- 1 Door section
- 2 Lab gel
- 3 Speechless
- 4 Bird food
- 5 Equalized
- 6 Pnestly
- 7 Mountain climber's item
- 8 Posture
- 9 Native: suff.
- 10 "Thoughts that breathe, and —"
- 11 Lily plant
- 12 — machine
- 13 Some actors
- 22 French river
- 24 Wrath
- 25 Corn unit
- 26 Commence
- 27 Am-uk
- 28 Tumbler
- 31 Spectral
- 32 Fumed
- 33 Put away
- 35 "— out of joint" (Hamlet)
- 40 Archaeology spots
- 41 Jillian of TV
- 42 Food troughs
- 43 Common abbr.
- 45 Dirt
- 46 Goose
- 49 Uplift
- 50 Gel rid of
- 51 Feel of —
- 52 Ploy
- 53 Theater gp.
- 56 Trebek or Haley
- 57 Goat cheese
- 58 Span of oxen
- 60 Drs.' org.

Save Water ... Every Drop Counts

Andy Capp

WHAT IS SO RARE AS A DAY IN JUNE?

THIS IS JULY

WHAT IS SO RARE AS A DAY IN JUNE, AND YOU MISSED IT AGAIN?

Mutt'n'Jeff

IT'S A GOOD LITTLE CAR, SIR! I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT FOR \$250

I'LL START THE ENGINE FOR YOU!

I'VE ONLY HAD IT A YEAR. IT'S VERY EASY ON GAS AND OIL! IT'S REALLY A BARGAIN!

JEFF SHUT THE ENGINE OFF SO THE MAN CAN SEE THE CAR!

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

PNA to link electric grid with Jordan

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is keen to end the dependence of the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Israeli electricity generating companies and to link their electric grids with neighbouring Arab countries, particularly Jordan and Egypt. Assistant Under-Secretary of the PNA's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Jawad Naji said the PNA was planning to establish electricity-generating stations all over the territories at a cost of \$500,000. Mr. Naji, who is attending a conference on the energy sector currently convened in Bethlehem, said all the territories get their electricity supply from an Israeli company, except for Jerusalem which gets its supply from a Palestinian company. Ahmad Hiyasat, a representative of the Jordan Electricity Authority who is attending the conference, said Jordan was ready to help the PNA in electricity-related fields (Al-Dustour).

Investors in the Amman Industrial City complain of the new vegetable market which was opened in Sahab. In a meeting with Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi, the investors said the street had been jammed with cars since the market was opened, noting that this affects their businesses and delays the employees coming to their work (Al Ra'i).

Director of the Ministry of Labour's Employment Department Bahjat Quteishat said employers in Jordan were hiring foreign labourers because Jordanians do not accept to do menial jobs, such as in construction works and cleaning. Mr. Quteishat said these jobs are available in abundance but the Jordanian job seekers do not approve of them, causing the ministry to give foreigners work permits to fill the vacant positions. He said Jordanians avoid such jobs because of the long working hours, low wages and lack of social security coverage. He said foreigners are not allowed to work in many other professions which are usually preserved for Jordanians. He urged citizens to inform the ministry of any establishment hiring foreigners without work permits (Al-Dustour).

The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) has granted farmers since the beginning of the year till the end of June some 2,445 loans worth JD 7.4 million. ACC Director General Mohammad Arabiyat said 65 per cent of these farmers were obtaining loans from the ACC for the first time. Mr. Arabiyat said the ACC plans to open two branches in Amman and Aqaba this year, bringing the number of the corporation's branches to 19 (Al Ra'i).

Arab markets slip into summer slumber

DUBAI (R) — Arab stock markets slid into their usual summer slumber last week, with volumes dropping as investors fled the Middle East beat for their annual holidays, leaving most share prices little changed.

Kuwait stayed in the limelight, with volumes keeping to their recent ascent, rising another 15 per cent in the week.

But the overall index edged lower in a mild correction after weeks of solid gains to end at 1,304 from 1,309.

National Bank extended its recent climb to end 20 fil up at 580. Commercial Bank cancelled the previous week's gains to close eight fil lower at 138. Sargan Bank was at 192 from 214.

In Egypt, the index kept falling, to end at 212.69 from a previous nine-month low of 218.89 points.

With many investors on leave, dealers said the market did not have the cash to absorb a string of new share issues and those issues linked to a government privatisation programme.

In Bahrain, demand for banking shares lifted the index 6.09 points to 1,302.09, but volumes dropped.

Shares on the unofficial United Arab Emirates bourse failed to continue a four-week rally and ended a slow week unchanged.

The National Bank of Abu Dhabi index crept 0.58 points up to 1,862.80 due to Al Dhafra insurance's five dirham jump to 635.

Insurance shares did well on an otherwise quiet Qatar market. Qatar Insurance gained five riyals to 511 and Qatar General Insurance rose six riyals to 396.

In Saudi Arabia, the index was little changed as volumes dropped by 20 per cent. Similarly, in Oman stocks were stable.

Investors took to the sidelines in Jordan ahead of a parliamentary debate on long-delayed draft investment and tax laws.

Heavyweight Arab Bank ARBK.AM lost 2,500 dinars to 216,000 dinars.

Solidere shares on the Beirut secondary market closed slightly lower.

U.S. banks expected to face wave of mergers

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. banks are the latest businesses caught up in a wave of mergers and the trend is likely to speed up over the coming months, analysts believe.

On Wednesday, First Chicago and NBD Bancorp Inc. announced their intention to merge, creating a giant with some \$120 billion in assets.

Earlier this week, PNC Bank agreed to acquire Midland Corp. for \$2.8 billion in stock.

And last month, in the biggest bank merger in the United States, First Union announced it would acquire First Fidelity for \$5.4 billion.

Banks now face what the Wall Street Journal recently described as a new experience — to buy or to be bought.

Rumours of mergers abound.

On Thursday, there were suggestions of a possible link between Chase Manhattan and Chemical Banking which would create a \$300 billion company.

The independence of regional U.S. banks, such as Bank of Boston and Florida-based Banker Bank, also appears to be under threat as they are no longer large enough to compete efficiently.

The U.S. banking industry comprises more than 10,000 banks, but not one large enough to rate in the world's top 20. It has long been ripe for rationalisation.

Analysts expect the wave of mergers will be boosted by the progressive lifting of restrictions prohibiting interstate banking activities and by limited expansion opportunities in traditional banking activities.

Faced with businesses resorting to self-financing and

to individual customers badly-frightened by ballooning debts in the 1980s, banks are finding it easier to buy up competitors to increase business rather than seek to win new clients.

Expansion is also seen as a way for banks to protect themselves from increasing competition from financial services.

"The banking industry was fragmented because that was what the regulations required," said William Seidman, former chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

"Now banks are trying to become more competitive through a larger depositors' base," he said.

"We lost 5,000 banks in the last six or seven years. We may move from 10,000 down to 5 or 6,000 over the same time," he suggested.

Acquisitions are made easier by the banks' growing

liquidity.

Moderate growth and low inflation have contributed to what Thomas Hanley, analyst at CS First Boston, calls a "banking paradise."

U.S. banks currently have \$40 billion of excess funds to play with and, if present trends continue, will have about \$150 billion by the year 2,000, Mr. Hanley said.

All the elements are in place for an explosion in mergers, analysts said.

The main trend is for the setting up of "super-regional" banks which first appeared 10 years ago with the liberalisation of laws governing interstate banking.

The trend has already led to the creation of banking giants such as Nations Bank, the fourth largest in the country, Banc One and now First Union and First Chicago NBD.

Saudi fertiliser firm first half net profit soars

MANAMA (R) — The Saudi Arabian Fertiliser Co. (SAFCO) said on Sunday net profit for the first six months of 1995 more than doubled to 267 million riyals (\$71 million) from 127 million (\$34 million) in the first half of last year.

SAFCO attributed the increase to improved fertiliser prices.

It said total sales climbed to 457 million riyals (\$122 million) from 352 million (\$94 million) a year earlier.

Shareholders' equity rose to 3.05 billion riyals (\$813 million) from 2.75 billion (\$733 million) at end-June 1994.

The Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC) SBIC. CN

owns 41 per cent of SAFCO, which is traded on the Saudi stock market, and the rest is held by Saudi investors.

SABIC itself is 70 per cent owned by the Saudi government.

Bank of England official quits in wake of Barings case

LONDON (AFP) — A senior Bank of England official responsible for supervising merchant banks resigned last week after being criticised in a report on the collapse of Barings Bank to be published Tuesday, press reports said Sunday.

The Sunday Times said Christopher Thompson would be the only official of the British central bank to quit over the February collapse of Barings after Britain's oldest bank incurred losses of \$860 million (\$1.3 billion) on derivatives trading to Asia.

The Sunday Telegraph said the report criticised faults in procedure rather than singling out Thompson directly.

Thompson, which has been eagerly awaited by the city for months, should establish the responsibilities for the failure of Barings. Press reports said it would also name Peter Norris, former executive head of Barings Investment Bank (BIB), and Ron Baker, the London supervisor of Singapore, trader Nick Leeson.

Mr. Leeson, 28, who was alleged to have prompted the fall of Barings by speculating heavily on the Japanese Nikkei index, is currently fighting extradition to Singapore for trial from a German prison on arrival from Frankfurt from Malaysia.

Mr. Clinton's announcement last Tuesday followed much soul-searching in Washington. Officially, Vietnam welcomed the move, but reaction in Hanoi to a decision seen as big on symbolism but small on impact has been subdued.

"We are very excited by this event," Hoang Van Dung of Vietnam's Chamber of Commerce and Industry said. "But the benefits lie further downstream."

"I don't think there will be movement on men or air links yet. Maybe next year."

Most favoured option (MFN) trading status is widely seen as being a key economic goal for Hanoi as it would allow Vietnam to compete with other countries that can export goods to the United States at low tariff rates.

Trade agreements and air links may come sooner, but business executives in Hanoi say these and other goals are secondary issues.

"I think benefits for Vietnam are technology transfer and management know-how," Pham Ngoc Gynh, a private business consultant, said. "But we need to work on an equal basis with the U.S. and so we need MFN."

Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister Le Mai indicated last Wednesday that Hanoi would discuss MFN, concessional financing and other benefits with Washington soon.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected

to visit Vietnam next month.

Vietnam enjoyed a growth rate of 8.8 per cent in 1994 and is forecast to see growth of 9.0 per cent in 1995.

The first six months of this year saw the value of exports grow by more than 35 per cent to \$2.2 billion, while imports rose 14.5 per cent to \$2.37 billion.

Since the U.S. trade embargo was lifted in February last year, American business has moved into Vietnam fast. U.S. trade representatives in Hanoi say Vietnam's relationship with Washington holds huge potential for growth.

"The Vietnamese know that access to the U.S. market is what fired the economy of South Korea, what fired the economy of Taiwan, and what fired the economy of Japan," said J. Jefferson Edwards of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council in Hanoi.

"MFN is some way off, but the Vietnamese must realise first that trade is a relationship, it's not a one-way street," he added.

Other analysts said the strategic implications of normalisation would benefit industries such as oil and gas. U.S. companies have petroleum licences in areas off Vietnam's coast that are in dispute between Hanoi and Beijing.

"Normalisation of relations with Vietnam would strengthen the ability of the United States both to play a more effective role in reducing the chances of conflict between China and Vietnam and provide more effective channels to protect U.S. interests in the South China Sea," Charles Johnson, an independent energy analyst, said.

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Gesture by Crown Prince, Princess Sarvath saves the day for women's basketball team

Royal assistance with travel cost 'is a dream come true' for players

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Thanks to the intervention of their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, smiles yesterday returned to faces of members of the women's national basketball team who will now most probably take part in the Asian basketball championship, which will be held in Shizuoka, Japan July 23-30.

Their Royal Highnesses, upon learning that the team was finding it difficult to secure funds for the trip, donated JD 5,000 to meet the group's travel costs.

On hearing the good news, Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) Chairman Awad Haddad immediately expressed his appreciation of the timely gesture and conveyed to the Crown Prince and Princess Sarvath the gratitude of the women's team which will be the only Arab group in the competition.

The cash-strapped team, who were regrouped after a 12-year absence, had undertaken their own fundraising campaign and collected JD 5,600 in addition to the JD 2,300 contributed by the limited budget of the JBF. Air fares to Japan will cost around JD 13,000.

"It is a dream come true," team captain Rana Hussein said. "The players never gave up hope that somebody as gracious as Their Royal Highnesses



would ultimately come to the rescue. They have always encouraged sports and women in the Kingdom, and we wholeheartedly thank them for their kind interest."

The team's coach, Fadi Sabbah, who was asked by the JBF to name only 10

the news today," player Tala Al Maue said. "The players cannot begin to express our thanks to Their Royal Highnesses."

Though the team is still on the waiting list of airlines, it is expected that the team will find their way to Japan by Friday. Should travel arrangements come through today, they would be leaving Amman Thursday and arrive in Tokyo on July 22.

Jordan will be facing Indonesia, Hong Kong, India, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand in Level B. Level A includes China, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Kazakhstan and Taiwan.

Because of limited funds however, the team only had four practice matches against Syrian champions Al Jala' who won two matches 62-59 and 69-51. Jordan won another two 54-37 and 45-37.

The Jordanian team was due to have played another four matches against an Ukrainian team. Citing a low budget, the JBF cancelled these matches earlier last week.

The Kingdom's team includes, besides Ms. Hussein and Ms. Maue, Jumana Sali, Hala Muheisen, Jehan Abdounour, Shuhair Makusi, Andira Kassieh, Tetiana Qardan, Hind Ghouri, Sirsa Naghaway, Zein Sha'sha'a and Rania Dajani.



Alexi Lalas (right) and teammate Ernie Stewart of the U.S. exercise during training in Paysandu, Uruguay (AFP photo)

Lalas acquisition by American League draws renewed criticism

NEW YORK (AP) — The accusations have been made before about Alan Rothenberg: he has a conflict of interest running the U.S. Soccer Federation and Major League Soccer, his bonus as head of the World Cup was exorbitant; he's profiting from MLS at the expense of the USSF and American soccer.

The accusations were loudest last summer after the World Cup, when he won a second term as president on the USSF. Now they're resurfacing, this time over the announcement that American national team defender Alexi Lalas next year will join MLS. Rothenberg's proposed first-division league.

The complaints are from the same people: Richard Groff and Ron Weinstein, commissioners of two already existing U.S. Soccer leagues, both of which will compete with MLS when, or if, it begins play next April.

Rothenberg dismisses the accusations from "those sources," calling them just U.S. soccer politics. But Groff and Weinstein say the evidence keeps piling up and question where it is going to stop.

"Certainly in the past we've been political opponents," says Groff, a former USSF treasurer who last year ran against Rothenberg for the federation presidency and now serves as commissioner of the six-term, second-division A-League.

"But I'll stand on my re-

cord. My whole involvement in soccer has been constructive. Alan has used the USSF to personally benefit. He did it with the world cup, he can't do it with the federation."

Rothenberg received a \$3 million bonus after the World Cup in lieu of a salary as chairman of the World Cup organizing committee, based on the \$30 million profit the quadrennial championship made but also criticized by many as too much.

The latest accusations revolve around the announcement nearly three weeks ago that Lalas, one of the few true "stars" on the U.S. national team, would return to play in MLS next summer.

The controversy is because Lalas has been under contract to the USSF, and no transfer fee was paid by MLS to the federation.

Groff and Weinstein's complaint essentially is that Rothenberg, the chief executive officer of MLS and who has been identified as an investor in the league, is personally benefiting by having MLS acquire a top name without having to pay for him. And the USSF is the loser.

Rothenberg counters by saying that is not out of the ordinary, that players under USSF contract have been allowed, since he took over as president, to go to domestic clubs without a fee as a way to promote American professional soccer.

"I had nothing to do with the creation of the policy,"

Rothenberg said. "No domestic league has ever had to pay one penny to the federation for a player. If the federation wants to change the policy, I'll exclude myself from the board meeting and they can vote."

Rothenberg, a Los Angeles lawyer, says he's not troubled by the latest charges. "Not from those sources," he said. "They're political opponents and political opponents even if destructive to soccer."

The issue also shows the split at the top of the American soccer community, most of which believes a first-class pro league should be the highest priority, and those that feel the league is being forced — at a cost.

Lalas is one of many players the federation paid a salary to under a program begun in 1988.

Trying to improve its international play without a first-division pro league, an entire training camp of players was placed under contract before the 1994 World Cup to prepare for the tournament, including Lalas.

After the World Cup, those who could win jobs on foreign clubs had their contracts sold or loaned, with the USSF keeping the profits of the transfers.

The contracts, however, were to expire after the World Cup. Some of the bigger names, like Lalas and midfielder Cobi Jones, had their deals with the USSF

extended to make their transfer to a foreign club easier, federation officials said. Contracts of others lapsed and a few joined a league or indoor clubs.

Lalas was loaned before last season to Italian club Padova, making him the first American ever to play in the Italian first division. His play at the World Cup earned him an honorable mention to the all-tournament team and his flaming red hair and rock-star like image have made him a popular player.

They also increased his transfer value.

The loan agreement with Padova gave the Italian club the right to purchase Lalas' contract from the USSF for this season for \$800,000. Instead it paid the U.S. federation another loan fee at a price Groff called "disappointing."

Groff, as a member of the USSF board of directors, said he was informed of the amount but couldn't disclose it.

Lalas, who has not signed with MLS but only agreed to play in the league, says he agreed to the deal because he wanted to return to the United States to play, and this "makes it easier for me."

In addition to his salary, he will get a signing bonus, what essentially would be his customary share of any transfer, although neither the Lalas, his agent nor the USSF would say how much.

Organisers: Atlanta Olympics will be best ever

ATLANTA (AP) — Olympics organisers have said it until they're tired of saying it: The 1996 Atlanta Games will be on time, on budget and the best ever.

Their chance to prove it is now just one year away.

Once the improbable dream of Atlanta lawyer Billy Payne and a few of his pals, the moment of truth is finally coming into view. With 35,000 people filling a brand new stadium, and millions more watching live on prime-time television, Atlanta's torch will be lit on what figures to be a typically humid evening July 19, 1996.

Envious, admired and decided for landing the Centennial Olympic Games, Atlanta has long waited for the opportunity to prove to the world that this city of America's "deep south" is committed itself too deeply.

In many big ways, Atlanta looks like it will make good on its promise.

A majestic Olympic stadium and other sports venues across and beyond the city are taking shape, some nearly completed. Television rights have been sold for record sums, and ticket sales are off to a strong start.

The area's best and brightest have devised a plan they assure will prevent gridlock in this car-crazy town. Jackhammers furnish Atlanta's summer soundtrack as crumbling bridges and streets

are rebuilt. City leaders team with confidence.

"Nobody thought Atlanta had a chance of winning the Olympics, and I think it's that same cynical sense that causes people to doubt our ability to do it," said Mayor Bill Campbell.

"All you can do is to do the best you can," he said. "The best revenge is living well."

If Payne, the president of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), ever entertained doubts that Atlanta's Games would be a roaring success, he's never let on.

"I've always felt good," Payne said. "That's my job." Sceptics, he said, will be proven wrong. Yet things keep happening to encourage the doubters.

Hotels are accused of flouting a law designed to bar price-gouging. Rural barrow county refused to let Somali athletes train, punishment for the African country's treatment of U.S. troops in 1993.

Organisers angered people across the state of Georgia by giving politicians a break on hard-to-get tickets. Advocates for the poor say the city has blown a once-in-a-lifetime chance to uplift Atlanta's neediest citizens.

Just last week, it was disclosed that two dormitory buildings for athletes in the Olympic village are settling excessively, sinking as much as 23 centimetres (9 inches)

into the ground. The state has brought in consultants to figure out why.

And money, always money, stays in the forefront. Unlike most Olympic Games, Atlanta's is being financed without major government help.

So even as the pages of the calendar flip toward the final months, ACOG likely will still be searching every nook and cranny to raise enough dollars to meet its \$1.58 billion budget.

The games have put an "official" stamp on everything from jet planes to pachino nuts. The largest outcry came when they made popular American TV shows "Wheel of Fortune" and "Jeopardy!" the official "game shows" of the Olympics.

What has long made folks in Atlanta cringe is the thought that their city, a mere baby on the international stage, will embarrass itself before the largest audience in history.

Atlanta residents, even those who eagerly await the Games, are impatient for proof that the city really is ready.

"The biggest thing the Olympics are going to do for Atlanta is we'll truly become an international city 15 years before we would have... but we've got to get on with the show," said Suani A. Pee-

bles, who owns an office-supply store a few blocks from three of the major Olympic sites.

"I've had people ask me on the street: where do you buy a foreign newspaper in Atlanta? where's a foreign exchange? We've got to start doing that," he said.

The allegations of price gouging by some Atlantans prompted state consumer officials to begin several investigations, although no charges have been brought. The Somali team quickly found a new training home in Gordon County. And ACOG is playing down the dispute as an isolated incident.

ACOG staunchly defended its ticket policy, even though some lawmakers who were potential recipients denounced it. The plan won praise from Canadian Dick Pound of the International Olympic Committee, who said at least the politicians were paying for their seats.

With most of the Olympics activity occurring downtown, Atlanta's penchant for traffic jams has resident Dick Ehni concerned. A traffic management plan that closes most downtown streets to individual cars offers scant comfort, he said.

"You can't plan enough," Ehni said. "All you need is one rotten apple to mess up... and all heck breaks loose."

Wheaton overpowers Black to reach final

NEWPORT (AP) — Defending champion David Wheaton used an overwhelming service game to take a straight-set victory over Zimbabwe's Byron Black on Saturday in the semifinals of the hall of fame tennis championships.

Wheaton, 26, the top seed in this grass court tournament, will face Germany's David Prinosil, a straight-set winner over Derrick Rostagno, in the final, it will be the sixth-seeded Prinosil's first ATP tour final.

Wheaton had seven aces and won 77 per cent of his first serves on his way to a 6-4, 6-1 win over the fourth-seeded Black. He saved two of three break points and broke Black on four of six opportunities in the 61-minute match.

The turning point was the 10th game of the first set. Leading 5-4 after trading breaks in the third and fourth games, the American won four straight points to break and take the set.

Wheaton dominated the second set, losing just four points on his serve and breaking Black's serve twice.



David Wheaton

"He sort of got on a roll and I didn't get a chance to break him and he put a lot of pressure on my serve," Black said. "I struggled to hang in there in the second set... he was serving big, serving huge."

Wheaton seemed able to fire at will in the second set, with the most impressive example coming in the final

game. Serving for the match, Wheaton fell behind 15-40, then blasted his way back with a 187 kph (116 mph) ace, a 161 kph (100 mph) service winner to pull to deuce and another big service winner on match point.

"Today I won a lot of the big points," Wheaton said. "I know that I'm in for a tough match when I play him."

The 22-year-old Prinosil also advanced in straight sets, but not as easily as Wheaton. He downed Rostagno, a wild card entrant, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

Prinosil went up a break in the second game of the first set, then double-faulted four times in the seventh game as Rostagno broke back. He recovered immediately, breaking Rostagno's serve in the next game, then holding serve in the ninth game to capture the set.

The scenario repeated itself in the second set, as Rostagno broke Prinosil in the sixth game, only to be broken back in the next game, losing the last two points on returns that bounced off the net cord.

"I just couldn't hold on to it, my serve was so poor," said Rostagno, 29, who was making a comeback after an elbow injury sidelined him for 18 months.

In the tiebreaker, Prinosil won a point on Rostagno's serve to go up 3-1, then held serve the rest of the way. He said he was just as happy not to have to play a third set.

Passarella's mistake 'a lesson for everyone'

RIVERA (R) — An ill-judged miscalculation by Argentine coach Daniel Passarella was a lesson for all football managers. Brazil boss Mario Zagalo said on Saturday.

Argentina suffered a humiliating 3-0 defeat against the United States in the Copa America on Friday after Passarella, with his team already sure of a quarter-final place, decided to rest most of his top players.

The defeat cost the defending Copa America champions top place in the group, which would have meant a quarter-final against Mexico. The U.S. finished top on goal difference, condemning Argentina to a clash with arch-rivals instead.

"It was a lesson for all managers to never underestimate the opposition," said Zagalo. "Passarella underestimated the opposition, making changes which also affected other teams."

"We have also been affected. We didn't want this game at this stage of the competition. Brazil against Argentina should be the final."

"The fact that he put on two first choice players when they were 3-0 behind was a visible demonstration that he knew he had made a mistake and that he never thought Argentina would lose first place."

"You never win a soccer match before it starts. He obviously imagined that Argentina would win 1-0 or at the very worst get a draw."

Major League Standings

NEW YORK (R) — Major League Baseball Standings after games played on Saturday.

American League

	East			
	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	40	32	.556	—
Detroit	37	35	.514	3
Baltimore	35	37	.486	5
New York	32	39	.451	7½
Toronto	29	43	.403	11

Central

Cleveland	50	21	.704	—
Milwaukee	36	36	.500	14½
Kansas City	35	35	.500	14½
Chicago	29	42	.408	21
Minnesota	25	47	.347	25½

West

California	41	30	.577	—
Texas	42	31	.575	—
Seattle	36	37	.493	6
Oakland	37	39	.487	6½

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	East	W	L	PCT	GB
Atlanta	46	26	.639	—	
Philadelphia	40	32	.556	6	
Montreal	35	38	.479	11½	
New York	27	45	.375	19	
Florida	25	44	.362	19½	

Central

Cincinnati	46	25	.648	—
Houston	40	31	.563	6
Chicago	37	36	.507	10
Pittsburgh	31	38	.449	14
St. Louis	32	42		

West

Colorado	40	32	.556	—
Los Angeles	36	36	.500	4
San Francisco	34	38	.472	6
San Diego	33	39	.458	7

World Basketball Championship Jordan face S. Korea today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

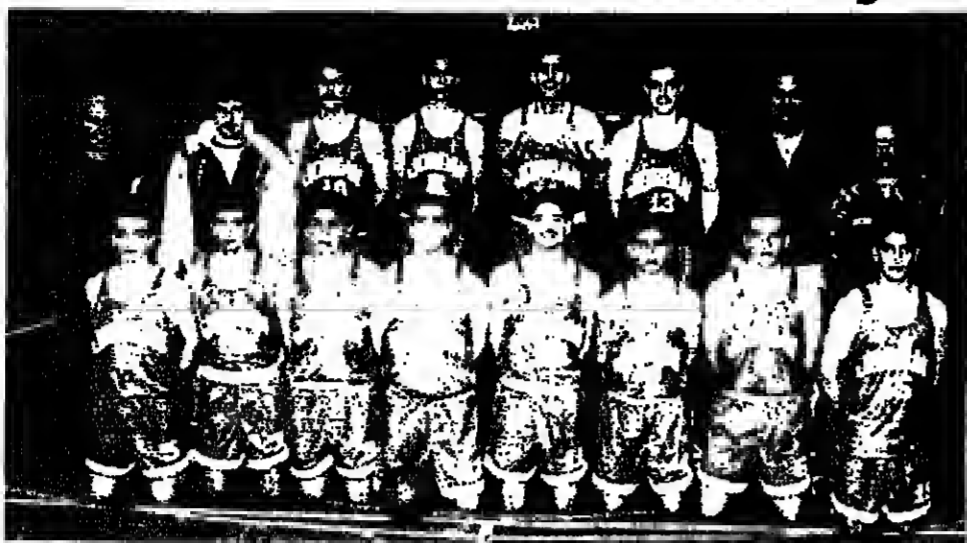
AMMAN — the Kingdom's Under-18 basketball team Monday begin their second round matches at the 5th Junior World Basketball Championship currently underway in Greece.

Jordan had finished last in Group C after losing to titleholders the U.S. 61-51, Australia 78-35 and Italy 87-64. They will now play South Korea, China, and Puerto Rico for 9-16th places.

Sixteen teams are taking part in the championship. The top eight moved into the semifinals and will play for 1-8th places. They are: Lithuania, Argentina, Australia, Spain, Croatia, France, the U.S. and Greece.

Teams joining Jordan's group in 9-16th places are Venezuela, Nigeria, Italy and Angola.

Jordan, the third place



Jordan's Under-18 basketball team

finisher in the Asia Championship in March, is representing the continent along with China and S. Korea.

The U-18 team is the first to represent Jordan in a world championship, and only the third Arab country

to qualify for the World Basketball Championship. Egypt finished last in Sao Paulo in 1979 while Syria came in 12th among 16 in the 1992 championship in Canada.

Jordan's team includes

Zeid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh, Ashraf Samarah, Mahmoud Sha'ban, Samer Nino, Ihab Msh, Ramzi Ghneim, Fadi Al Saqa, Zeid Zu'mot, Ra'ed Ghosheh, Ziyad Naghoj and Seif Lada.

Magic doubts return to Lakers

BOSTON (AP) — Magic Johnson doesn't think he will return to the Los Angeles Lakers next season.

Johnson told the Boston Globe that the positive response to his new 12-screen cinema complex in a largely black section of Los Angeles "really calls on me not to go back to play basketball....

"I now understand why I don't want to come back. I'm not making a few people happy, but a whole community. I'm giving them some hope and making them dream. That makes me say, 'you know what? It's not worth coming back because of this,' he told the newspaper.

The theatre, he said, "is probably going to be my life."

Johnson, who turns 36 next month, has flirted with the idea of coming back to the sport, which he left in 1991 after learning he had the HIV virus.

Lakers general manager Jerry West has said Johnson would be welcomed back.

"We're talking about it, so we have to see what happens. It's nothing that's definite yet," Johnson said earlier this month.

In a joint venture with Sony Theatres, Johnson opened the Magic Johnson theatre two weeks ago in the Baldwin Hills-Crenshaw district. It is the only theatre serving the area, which is known for the riots that swept through the inner city in 1992.

Russia, Brazil in volleyball final

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Defending champion Brazil struggled through four sets but prevailed over Italy 15-8, 15-12, 15-7 Saturday night to reach the final at the Men's Junior World Volleyball Championship.

It will face Russia, which early beat championship debutante Finland, 15-12, 15-6, 15-5 in a little over an hour, the national news agency Bernama, said 300 kilometres south of Kuala Lumpur.

The European champion Russians will be seeking a fifth world crown having won in 1977, 1981, 1985 and 1989. Russia used its superior size, including the tallest player in the tournament — 2.17-metre (7-foot-1) Alexei Kazakov, to overwhelm the Finns.

Uchakov wins in longest breakaway of Tour

REVEL, France (R) — Sergei Uchakov won Ukraine's first ever stage victory in the Tour de France on Saturday as a long breakaway paid off for the fourth time in five days.

On the second longest stage of the race, the Ukrainian featured with three other riders in the longest breakaway of the Tour and won with a 19-minute advantage over the main bunch, the biggest time gap so far.

But for the main riders the 13th stage over 245 kilometres from Mende was a gentle transition with all the leaders staying with the peloton before the race moves into the Pyrenees.

Spain's Miguel Indurain retained his race leader's yellow jersey with an advantage of two minutes 44 seconds over Swiss Alex Zülle.

Uchakov got away with American Lance Armstrong, the 1993 world champion, Italian Bruno Cenghialta and Herman Buenahora of Colombia after only 38 kms following the day's first climb over the Cote de Chanac.

They kept stretching their lead over an inactive peloton until Uchakov and Arm-

strong broke away from the other two to fight for the stage victory seven kms from the end.

Armstrong, who won a stage victory in the Tour two years ago, took up a perfect position on the Ukrainian's wheel for the final sprint as Uchakov slowed right down and glanced nervously over his shoulder.

But when the American finally made his move in the last 100 metres, Uchakov was

Uchakov, who completed a hat-trick of stage wins in the major tours after his victories in the Spaish Vuelta in 1993 and this year's Giro d'Italia, has come out of the shadow of Djamolidine Abdoujaparov this season.

The Ukrainian used to set up sprint finishes for the Uzbek but since Abdoujaparov switched teams he has been racing for himself.

"My team manager told me I should believe in myself

Tour de France

ready for him and produced a burst of speed to resist the challenge.

"He was faster," Armstrong said breathlessly afterwards. "I was surprised, he was much faster."

The two were clocked in five hours 50 minutes 45 seconds with Cenghialta just beating Buenahora for third place 59 seconds later. The main bunch came in 19 minutes 14 seconds behind Uchakov.

and that I could be a great champion and beat the best riders," he said.

"I had that in my mind at the end because I felt at first that Armstrong was faster than me. Then I thought that I had won a sprint to the giro and that I could do it again."

The main beneficiary of the day was Buenahora, who jumped from 23rd to ninth place in the overall standings. Cenghialta also moved into the top 20.

Egypt takes lead in Davis Cup

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Egypt took the lead in Davis Cup qualifying matches on Saturday when its doubles team of Hesham Hemida and Tamer Al-Sawi outplayed their Slovak opponents.

The scores in the contest against Slovaks Jan Krosak and Carl Kotchira were 7-6, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3.

On Friday, Egypt and Slovakia split singles victories in the qualifying matches for the European-African region.

Krosak withdrew Friday after three matches because of a muscle strain, forfeiting to Al-Sawi, while Kotchira defeated Egyptian Omar Ghoncin.

Graf considering quitting Germany

BONN (R) — Wimbledon champion Steffi Graf said on Saturday she was considering moving away from Germany following recent problems with the tax authorities, including a much-publicised raid on her house.

The multi-millionaire tennis star, whose tax affairs have been front page news in her homeland this week, said she believed her financial affairs were all in order.

But, asked whether she might be leaving the country because of the affair, the 26-year-old star told German television: "My thoughts are going in that direction. I would like to stay in Germany. I have been here all my life and I have felt very happy here."

"Of course, it is not an easy subject. I am thinking about it and I need some time to do so."

German tax inspectors confirmed this week that they had searched the homes of Graf and her father Peter in May. In her first public reaction to the affair, Graf said she had been told that the

investigation into her complicated tax matters could take between five and 10 years.

The German, whose career has been hampered by a serious back injury in recent months which some observers believe might bring a premature end to her career, said the difficulties could hit her game.

"It could affect me (on court). It is not easy to deal with it. I have enough problems," she said. "I want to concentrate on my tennis. That has not been that easy recently. Now it is going to be a bit more difficult."

German taxes are among some of the highest in Europe with the top tax on income at 53 per cent.

Although she has houses abroad, including two homes in the United States, Graf is one of the few major German sports stars not to have sought out a tax haven.

Three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker lived for several years in Monte Carlo while fellow tennis star Michael Stich and leading soccer personality Franz

Beckenbauer reside in Austria.

Graf said she had put the details of her tax affairs in the hands of her father and tax advisers from early in her career. She said she had absolutely no idea how much money she had even earned for winning her sixth Wimbledon title last weekend.

"It is not normal that I go and get the cheque (at tournaments)," she said. "It is my father or someone else who is asked to deal with it. I have little to do with it."

"I have tried to do everything correctly (as far as tax is concerned). I am confident that everything has gone okay."

The affair has brought poor publicity to Graf as she prepared to launch a career in fashion next week by presenting her first collection in Berlin.

Asked why the tax authorities had raided her house, Graf said: "They have not given a reason yet why they came. They say there is a tax investigation. But they have given no details."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSHI
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SAFETY FIRST

Both vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH

♠ A 3 5

♥ 10 5

♦ 2 3

♣ A Q 2 2

WEST

♠ 1

♥ Q J 7 3

♦ Q J 8 7 4

♣ 10 4 3

SOUTH

♠ K 10 8 4

♥ K 5

♦ K 5

♣ K J 5

The bidding:

South West North East

1♠ Pass 3♠ Pass

4♠ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

The flop is a strange creature.

Usually, when you take it you are hoping to collect an extra trick that you might not be able to win otherwise. But there are times when you wish it will lose—for example when you have stayed in game and slam depends only on the finesse. And there are occasions when you don't care much whether it succeeds or loses because your contract is safe either way. Here's an illustration.

Suppose you get to four spades on the auction above. North's jump to three spades is forcing and, since you have no slam ambitions, you simply raise to game.

You receive the lead of the queen of hearts. Is there any threat to your contract? You are assured of 10 tricks: four spades, five clubs and the ace of

hearts. The only problem is that East might gain the lead with the queen of spades and shoot a diamond through the king in which case you could lose two diamond tricks, a heart and a trump.

Once you have isolated the problem, the solution is easy to find. Allow the queen of hearts to hold the first trick (to cover the defender's communications in that suit) and win the continuation. Lead a trump to the ace and continue with a low spade. When East follows low, finesse the ten. If it loses, West can't attack diamonds profitably and you have your 10 tricks. If it wins, you have not only saved a contract that might otherwise have been defeated, but as a reward, you score an overtrick.

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Syria, Israel to resume talks in a week or two—Christopher

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Peace talks between Israel and Syria will resume "within a week or two" at ambassador level, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said here Sunday.

Speaking on NBC television, Mr. Christopher said these were "very tough" negotiations, adding that "we should not overreact on the ups and downs."

Mr. Christopher did not rule out returning to the Middle East if necessary after his scheduled trip to Asia in late July and early August.

U.S. envoy Dennis Ross ended a four-day shuttle between Jerusalem and Damascus on Friday, having failed to set a new date for talks between military experts.

Meanwhile, a leading Syrian government newspaper Sunday denounced

Israel for blaming Damascus for a setback in peace negotiations that has prevented key talks between military chiefs resuming in Washington.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Saturday that peace talks with Damascus had reached crisis point and he said the fault lay entirely with the Syrians.

"I must say I'm very happy that no one can place the blame on Israel. This crisis is a Syrian creation," Mr. Peres, who is currently in Paris, said in an interview with Israel Radio.

The Tishrin daily said Israel has returned to "deceit and manoeuvring by trying to hold Syria responsible for the crisis engulfing the idea of continuing military discussions."

Damascus said Saturday it would not be sending its

chief-of-staff, Lieutenant-General Hikmat Shehadi, to Washington to resume military talks held there last month. It accused Israel of "conducting negotiations just for the sake of negotiations."

Tishrin said there was no point in Syria sending military experts to Washington "so long as Israel is still trying to gain security privileges that would infringe on Syria's sovereignty on the Golan Heights."

Tishrin noted that Israel's call for the military experts' meeting was "an overt manoeuvre to waste time and to create a false impression that peace is imminent."

It urged Israel to rid itself of the illusion that Syria would ever accept a partial withdrawal or security arrangements that infringed on its sovereignty and national security.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday visits headquarters of the Hashemite Charity Organisation (Petra) (photo)

Prince Hassan asserts Kingdom will continue to provide humanitarian aid to Bosnia

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday underlined the need for the Hashemite Charity Organisation (HCO) to double its efforts in providing relief and humanitarian aid to people suffering from civil strife and the consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

Speaking during a visit to the HCO offices, the Crown Prince said there should be close cooperation between official and non-governmental organisations involved in charity and humanitarian aid in order to reflect Jordan's

distinguished role in alleviating the suffering of people in troubled regions around the world.

Noting that the HCO has provided aid to Sudan when it was facing drought, he said that the organisation has been and will continue to provide humanitarian aid to the Bosnian population.

The Crown Prince's visit came one day after His Majesty King Hussein II of Morocco to discuss with him the situation in Bosnia in light of the latest Serbian raids. The King said Jordan

would be ready to join in any effort to provide humanitarian assistance to the Bosnian population.

Prince Hassan also visited the Jordanian Society of Returnees who incurred losses as a result of the Gulf crisis and was briefed by the society's president about its services to the returnees and the obstacles obstructing the society's programmes.

The Crown Prince called on the society members to coordinate their work with other non-governmental organisations as well as the official institutions operating in similar fields.

Following the meetings, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi said that the Crown Prince was briefed on the HCO's activities and programmes for providing humanitarian and relief aid to victims of civil war and natural disasters.

Dr. Abbadi, who is the HCO's secretary general, said that the organisation was implementing the Crown Prince's directives in pursuing active participation in providing aid to the Bosnian people who are now facing Serbian aggression.

Poli: Don't ban beggars from French streets

PARIS (R) — A majority of French people disapprove of a recent decision by several mayors to order beggars off the streets, an opinion poll released Saturday showed. The IFOP survey for the newspaper Le Journal Du Dimanche found 55 per cent of those questioned disagreed with the ban on street begging while 42 per cent approved. Some 56 per cent of French people said they sometimes gave money to beggars while only 20 per cent said they never gave. The decision by the left-wing mayors of La Rochelle and Pau and the conservative mayor of Perpignan to outlaw begging and order police to round up tramps, alcoholics and beggars has stirred national debate. The mayors argue that since their cities run social services and support associations that help the homeless and poor, there is no justification for aggressive begging in the streets. Critics say many beggars have fallen through the holes in France's social safety net either because they have been unemployed too long, or because they are homeless and cannot survive on a minimum-income welfare benefit. The fight against poverty and homelessness was a major issue in this year's presidential election campaign and President Jacques Chirac promised to heal France's "social fracture."

Oldest housing settlement found in Bulgaria

SOFIA (AFP) — Archeologists in central Bulgaria claimed Saturday to have discovered the oldest homes in Europe, when they stumbled across two underground homes dating back to the seventh century B.C. The two underground dwellings, which were discovered at the beginning of July, were discovered by accident under a military shooting range, Petar Stanev, the archeologist at Veliko Tarnovo, said. The underground homes were smeared with plaster and covered in grass and had a simple round entrance, Stanev said. They were of similar design to homes discovered in Cyprus and Jericho, Jordan, he added.

Motorcycle midwives to ride in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — Along with the clean towels, forceps and plenty of hot water, midwives in Sri Lanka are to be given motorcycles, a newspaper said. Health Minister A.H.M. Fowzie, who is also minister of highways, said he would provide midwives with motorcycles because of the size of their service areas, the Daily News said. There should be a midwife for every 3,000 people, but one health official told Mr. Fowzie there were just one midwife to 5,000 people in her area, the newspaper said.

Judge orders man who hit woman to marry her

CINCINNATI, Ohio (AFP) — A judge said a man convicted of punching his girlfriend must marry the woman within nine months or face a jail sentence, a court order that immediately earned the consternation of women's groups. "I happen to believe in traditional American values: boy meets girl, boy asks girl out, boy and girl go steady, boy and girl get married, and then boy and girl start raising a family," said Municipal Judge Albert Mestemaker in an order. Judge Mestemaker ordered the sentence for Scott Hancock, 25, who pleaded no contest to domestic violence. He had punched his girlfriend, Yvonne Sevier, 24, during a June 24 argument. The couple, who have been together for five years, have a five-year-old daughter. The judge also handed him a four-month suspended sentence, a \$100 fine, placed him on nine months' probation and ordered him to undergo counselling. Judge Mestemaker wrote in his order that the "defendant and victim shall sanctify their relationship with a wedding."

Israeli deputy minister commits suicide

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur, who commanded the capture of Jerusalem's old city in the 1967 Middle East war, killed himself Sunday with a gunshot in the neck, ending a long bout with cancer, police said. He was 65.

Mr. Gur was found in the garden of his Tel Aviv home, his pistol and a suicide note next to him. Mr. Gur wrote that he could not bear the pain caused by his illness any longer and did not wish to burden his family, radio reports said.

Mr. Gur, a career military man, was best known for the words, "The Temple Mount is in our hands." He uttered them over the military communications system after he and his paratrooper unit captured Jerusalem's old city, including the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, in the 1967 war.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who fought side-by-side with Mr. Gur in the 1948 Middle East war, paid tribute to him Sunday at the start of the weekly cabinet session.

In the last three years, Mr. Gur mainly served as Mr. Rabin's liaison with Israeli hardliners. As deputy defence minister, Mr. Gur frequently met with Jewish settlers in an attempt to calm their fears over a possible withdrawal from lands captured in the 1967 war, including the West Bank and Golan Heights.

Mr. Gur had been suffering from cancer for several years. He underwent treatment in Israel and abroad, but never commented publicly on his illness. "Apparently he reached a point this morning where he couldn't take the suffering anymore," Health Minister Ephraim Sneh, a friend, told army radio.

Algeria passes new poll law

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's government-appointed assembly on Sunday voted unanimously in favour of a law covering presidential elections which could herald an end to three years of political violence, state radio said.

The army-backed authorities have pledged to hold elections by the end of the year. The vote by the Transitional National Council was in theory the last stage before they are launched.

But political analysts said the sacking of hardline Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif and the deadlock in dialogue with Muslim militant leaders now cast doubt about the authorities' political agenda.

No date has been set for the elections nor has it been announced who will bid for the presidency as the candidate backed by the army and its political allies.

Echoing doubts about if the poll would be held, La Liberté newspaper said on Sunday: "If the state is ready technically for elections, is it the same politically?"

The cancellation of elections in January 1992 which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win plunged the North African country into a virtual civil war in which at least 40,000 people have been killed.

Officials say the military situation is improving. Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi told state television on Saturday night: "The deplorable situation endured by Algeria has moved towards easing for some months. There is a per-

ceptible improvement but the situation is still unacceptable."

Speaking four days after the authorities blamed militant leaders for blocking a deal with the detained FIS President Abassi Madani, Mr. Sifi said they were still committed to the dialogue.

"The only goal for the dialogue is seeking a means to get back to the process of democracy and elections. The President (Liamine Zeroul) is still open to every side which has the means to help the country overcome the crisis," Mr. Sifi said.

Violence continues, however. Sunday's El Watan newspaper reported several militant attacks, including, booby-trapped cars, in the past few days in Algiers.

Three security personnel were wounded on Thursday when a homemade bomb exploded as their patrol passed. Muslim militants also blasted a municipal council building in the same area, destroying a large part of it, the newspaper said.

Guerrillas on Wednesday shot dead three policemen in a cafe in the fundamentalist stronghold of Bab El Oued in Algiers.

One unnamed civilian was kidnapped on the same day from his home. The body was later found beheaded, Al Watan added.

Two guerrillas were killed in a battle with security forces inside a mosque on Wednesday, it said.

Security officials said on Saturday troops killed 29 Muslim guerrillas in search operations across the country between Monday and Thursday.

Arab League slams West over Bosnia

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Arab League said on Sunday that Western inaction in halting Serbian crimes against Bosnian Muslims smacked of racism and double standards.

"The international impotence by the United Nations, NATO and the European Union... raises a dangerous question which is 'are we facing a form of racism,'" Adnan Omran, Arab League under-secretary general for political affairs, told reporters.

"How come the United Nations succeeds in imposing severe sanctions on Libya that are being implemented harshly, while it fails to do anything to stop the horrendous massacres that are being committed every day in Bosnia," Mr. Omran said.

Sudan complains to OAU of 'Egyptian aggression'

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has complained to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) about Egypt's conduct in the disputed Halaib area, where troops have twice clashed and Sudan says 'Egyptians have cut off water and medical supplies.'

On the Nile Valley border to the west, Sudan reported tension between the two armies, with Sudanese troops ignoring Egyptian orders to abandon their positions. In a letter to Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, current OAU chairman, Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir urged the OAU to live up to its responsibilities and halt what he called "Egyptian aggression," the official news agency SUNA reported.

Sudan accused Egypt of withholding the water and medical supplies to Halaib 14 days ago, soon after Egypt started accusing Khartoum of helping the gunmen who attacked Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's motorcade

in Ethiopia on June 26. Egyptian and Sudanese forces clashed in the disputed triangle at about the same time and Sudan said three of its policemen were killed in the fighting.

The Sudanese army said on Sunday that Egypt had ordered Sudanese forces at Argeen, near the border with Egypt, to evacuate their trenches and positions and move south.

Army spokesman Brigadier Mohammad Bashir Sulaiman told state radio the Sudanese army in the area was under orders not to negotiate with the Egyptians. Last year Sudan complained to the U.N. Security Council that Egypt had sent troops into the area around Argeen, a village on the west bank of the Nile. Sudan says Argeen lies in undisputed territory south of the 22nd Parallel.

In an attempt to strengthen its claim to Halaib, which lies on the Red Sea Coast to the east, Egypt announced last

week plans to set up a radio station to keep residents in touch with "the motherland" and the Egyptian government said it would improve services in the area.

Lieutenant-General Bashir told the Ethiopian president that Egypt's actions in Halaib were a flagrant violation of the OAU's charter and principles.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha, meanwhile said on Sunday that Gulf Arab states supported Khartoum's bid to ease a crisis with Egypt. "The trip is going well. We have communicated our viewpoint with different Arab leaders and we have received positive response so far," Mr. Taha told Reuters. "We hope that the turmoil with Egypt will soon cool down."

Mr. Taha was in the United Emirates as part of a Gulf tour to rally support in the row with Cairo.

Iraq frees Americans

(Continued from page 1)

the Iraqi government for taking this positive humanitarian action.

Mr. Christopher, speaking on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press," confirmed that Mr. Richardson was on a private mission.

"No letter was delivered, no concessions were made. He wasn't authorised to negotiate," Mr. Christopher said.

The wives of the two freed men said they were elated. "I never lost hope. I never got discouraged," Kathy Daliberti said from Jacksonville, Florida. She said she first heard the news from her father-in-law, who heard it on TV, but that the State Department also called.

"Obviously, I am absolutely elated and I can't believe this whole ordeal is coming to an end," Mr. Barloon's wife, Linda, told Cable News Network. She said she expected the men would leave Iraq by a desert highway to Jordan, a 10-hour drive.

Mr. Barloon, 39, of New Hampton, Iowa, and Mr. Daliberti, 41, of Jacksonville, Florida, worked for U.S. defence contractors in Kuwait. They were sentenced by an Iraqi court to eight year prison terms in March, 12 days after they were arrested in-

side Iraqi territory. They said they strayed across the border from Kuwait by mistake.

Iraqi officials, bitter at U.S. efforts to maintain crippling U.N. trade sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, claimed that Mr. Barloon and Mr. Daliberti may have been involved in espionage.

The timing of the release was puzzling, as the U.N. Security Council extended the trade sanctions on Iraq for another 60-day period last month, alleging that Iraq had not accounted for missing growth cultures in its clandestine biological weapons programme.

Iraq news agency (INA) reported that President Saddam "expressed his wish to Richardson that heads of state, especially the powerful states, would observe humanitarian considerations when dealing with all issues, whether those pertaining to individuals or people."

That was clearly intended as a message to the Security Council to consider the worsening hardship being suffered by Iraq's 20 million people.

Asked why President Saddam agreed to release the two, Mr. Christopher said, "It's very hard to probe the mind of Saddam Hussein."

Kuwait, S. Arabia

(Continued from page 1)

agreed perfectly on the demarcation of both their sea and land borders."

A former Kuwaiti minister and historians in the region said Saudi Arabia rejects Kuwait's contention that the islands of Qaruh and Um Al Maradim belong to Kuwait.

In September 1949, the Kuwaiti government awarded the American Oil Company of California a concession to prospect for oil on the two islands, as well as on Kubar island further to the north.

Saudi Arabia protested the decision, forcing the U.S. company to stop its operations.

Kuwait has since raised the issue many times but no solution has been found, the former Kuwaiti minister and historians said.

Kabariti ends visit

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kabariti, who was received by Prince Saud Al Faisal on Saturday, said upon his arrival in Riyadh that it was time "to emerge from the effects of abnormal conditions so we may resume working together."

Tension between Jordan and Saudi Arabia surfaced after Riyadh accused Amman of supporting Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

A meeting between Mr. Kabariti and Prince Saud Al Faisal in Cairo on the sidelines of a meeting of the Arab League recently resulted in continued communication between the two sides.

Officials, however, have warned against expecting a dramatic change in relations, and dampened expectations that Mr. Kabariti's visit would lead to a summit between His Majesty King Hussein and King Fahd.

"It is a door-opening visit which we hope would help break the ice and restore

ties," a Jordanian official told Reuters.

However, Mr. Kabariti's visit was seen as a cornerstone in breaking the barrier and moving towards better relations with Saudi Arabia, which is also seen as the key to heralding a Kuwaiti-Jordanian reconciliation process.

King Hussein on Thursday said that he hoped Mr. Kabariti's visit would be "a step towards establishing solid relations between the two countries."

"God willing, it will be another step to build solid and lasting basis (for relations) between the two countries. This is what we hope for and work for," the King said.

Mr. Kabariti, eager to consolidate Jordanian-Gulf relations, has already visited the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain since he took office as foreign minister in January.

PLO, Israel start talks

(Continued from page 1)

zones of varying redeployment scopes and security arrangements, he said.

"As for elections, we hope to finish that file but a meeting between President (Yasser) Arafat and (Israeli Prime

Minister Yitzhak) Rabin would close that file," he said.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin would meet as soon as progress in the talks and in drafting the accord occurred, Mr. Abu Libdeh said.

Western military chiefs

(Continued from page 1)

centre of Zepa as of an hour ago (1200 GMT)," U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanko told Reuters in Sarajevo.

"From what I understand there's not much resistance. Ukrainian peacekeepers withdrew from three observation posts west of the city this morning and are at the U.N. compound in the town itself."

Mr. Ivanko said a request for NATO air presence over the area had been initiated by the Ukrainian company commander in Zepa and was "moving up the chain of command."

NATO jets flew several combat missions in support of Dutch troops protecting the "safe area" of Srebrenica last week but the pocket fell to Serb forces on Tuesday anyway.

Serb troops are unlikely to be impressed by NATO air presence, which amounts to a benign show of force rather than a threat of attack.

About 15,000 Bosnian Muslims are believed to be trapped in Zepa, a remote and rugged mountain enclave which has been surrounded by separatist Serb forces throughout the 39-month Bosnian war. The area measures only about 10 km wide.

U.N. officials estimate

only 600 to 1,000 of those residents could be counted as soldiers of any sort.

Bosnian army troops disarmed the three remaining Ukrainian observation posts this morning in an effort to garner more weapons for the town's defence, Mr. Ivanko said.

"It is unbelievable that there are those who still want to buy time talking, who still argue in favour of the arms embargo," complained Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic as word of Zepa's precarious position reached him.

The fall of Zepa less than a week after 40,000 Muslims were rounded up and expelled or imprisoned in Srebrenica may accelerate the collapse of a peacekeeping mission undermined by a lack of unity and resolve among Western nations.

U.N. Security Council members created six "safe areas" in 1993 — Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde, Bihac, Tuzla and Sarajevo.

The secretary general asked for 37,000 peacekeepers to secure the areas and got 7,000 instead, the reason most often cited by U.N. officials in recent days to explain the fall of Srebrenica.

The three eastern enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde have always been vulnerable.

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Israel, Jerusalem, Arafat, Rabin
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